

# The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, January 30, 1992

Published Since 1877

## Prime-time TV understates influences of religion in U.S.

By Mark Wingfield

TUPELO, Miss. (ABP) — If prime-time television represented reality, America's churches would be nearly empty and the most substantial prayer people uttered would be "Thank God" after a close escape from disaster.

Those are the findings of a new study on television and religion commissioned by the American Family Association of Tupelo, Miss. The conservative watchdog group hired three educators with advanced degrees — one communications professor and two psychiatry professors — to conduct extensive research of how religion is portrayed on prime-time network dramas and comedies.

The research was done by Thomas Skill of the University of Dayton, John Lyons of Northwestern University, and David Larson of Duke University Medical Center.

The trio analyzed 100 episodes of fictional shows appearing on the ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox networks for a period of one month in late 1990.

Results of their work were released in late December.

From those 68 hours of programming, they found only 5.4% of all characters had an identifiable religious affiliation. In reality, 89% of all Americans claim a religious affiliation, according to the latest Gallup polls.

And while at least 40% of Americans report they have attended a church service in the past week, the TV characters in the study almost never were shown attending church or talking about going to church.

"The extremely small number of significantly religious or spiritual behaviors on network television suggest that the religious or spiritual dimensions of people's lives are mostly invisible," the report concludes.

"Overall, characters rarely acknowledge or reflect a belief in God or Jesus, and on the occasions when they do make such references, those comments tend to be ambiguous."

Although network television rarely degrades religion, it abuses Americans' religious involvement by neglect, the report says: "Overall, the message being presented about religion by network television is that it is not very important because it is rarely a factor in the lives of the characters presented on TV or in the society in which they are portrayed."

Of the 81 characters clearly identified as Christians during the test period, 36% were found in just three episodes: 17 Catholics in two episodes of "Father Dowling Mysteries" and nine Protestants in one episode of "Amen."

"Father Dowling Mysteries" also provided the largest example of religious symbolism on prime-time TV, the study found. The series is about a Catholic priest and nun who double as amateur detectives.

Images of churches, cathedrals, temples, and synagogues, along with

crosses, crucifixes, nuns, and priests, were the most common religious symbolism identified in the study.

Although in reality twice as many Americans identify themselves as Protestants than as Catholics,

Catholic images such as priests, nuns, and crucifixes dominate religious symbolism on TV, the study found.



### Christmas in China

Bicycles crammed every available space outside the Dong Shan Church in Guangzhou, China, during a Christmas Eve worship service. Despite uncertainty about government warnings to tone down Christmas festivities, crowds of faithful Christians jammed churches in China to celebrate Christmas. About 2,000 people attended the Christmas Eve celebration at Dong

Shan Church. "The only problem was there were so many bicycles that you couldn't get through the parking lot," said American visitor Charlie Wilson. "There was a complete sense of freedom to come and go and a lot of people came in off the street." (BP photo by Charlie Wilson)

The researchers concluded Catholicism has "high profile" on TV because its members "serve as convenient stereotypes for images of religion."

Also, while in reality women are more likely to be active in church affairs than men, the reverse is portrayed in prime time. The study found 68% of all religious behaviors portrayed on TV were done by men. In reality, Gallup polls have shown, 44% of American women report having attended worship in the past week, while only 36% of men claim the same.

Other findings of the study include:

— Some type of personal prayer is shown on prime-time TV once every 90 minutes on average. However, the most common event researchers classified as prayer was utterance of "Thank God" after a character narrowly escaped disaster.

— Public prayer is virtually never portrayed on prime-time television. Even the common American practice of giving thanks before family meals was found fewer than eight times among the 100 episodes studied.

— Religious values are rarely alluded to as a factor in how a character behaves or responds to situations. Only six instances were found when a character said anything to reflect standards of Christian living, traditions, or practices. Only 11 instances were found where God's influence on events was cited.

— If God makes out poorly on prime time, the devil does even worse.

"There is not a preoccupation with the devil or evil forces on prime-time television," the researchers concluded. "Characters infrequently reference the devil, and when they do, they clearly do not favor evil."

— When religion is portrayed on television, it receives positive treatment 75% of the time. The researchers cited ABC as most likely to frame religion and spirituality positively and Fox as least likely to frame religion positively.

— Weddings and funerals are the most commonly depicted religious activities on prime-time TV.

Wingfield is news director of WESTERN RECORDER, Kentucky.

### Index

Romania .....	p. 5
Devotional .....	p. 9
Letters .....	p. 9
Church news .....	pp. 8, 10
Keith Parks .....	p. 4

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

Historical Commission, SBC  
Nashville, Tennessee



# EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

## Hearers of the Word

For every sermon prepared by one person there is an average of 150 listeners, some unprepared. Preparing the message and the people is important. Rumor has it that a Britisher wrote to an editor declaring that in 30 years he had listened to 3,000 sermons and could not recall a single one. After much conflict, the editor wrote back: "I have been married for 30 years and in that time I have eaten 32,830 meals. I can scarce recall the menu of a single one. Yet I have the distinct impression that without them, I would have starved to death long ago."

The trials and burdens of the congregation, sometimes called suffering in the pew, has become the point of many pointless jokes, some enjoyable. "Pastor, we never knew what sin was 'til you came," or, "Pastor, your sermons have been such a blessing to my husband since he lost his mind."

Still, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). Moreover, Paul reminds us that faith comes (not by signs and wonders, not by burning candles, not by repetitious liturgy) "by hearing" the Word of the Lord (Rom. 10:17). Jesus said, "He that hath ears, let him hear" (Mt. 13:9).

Thus, much of a sermon's quality lies with the hearer. Good hearing makes good sermons — sometimes. It is when the pastor speaks "Thus saith the Lord," we had best be listening to what God is saying to us.

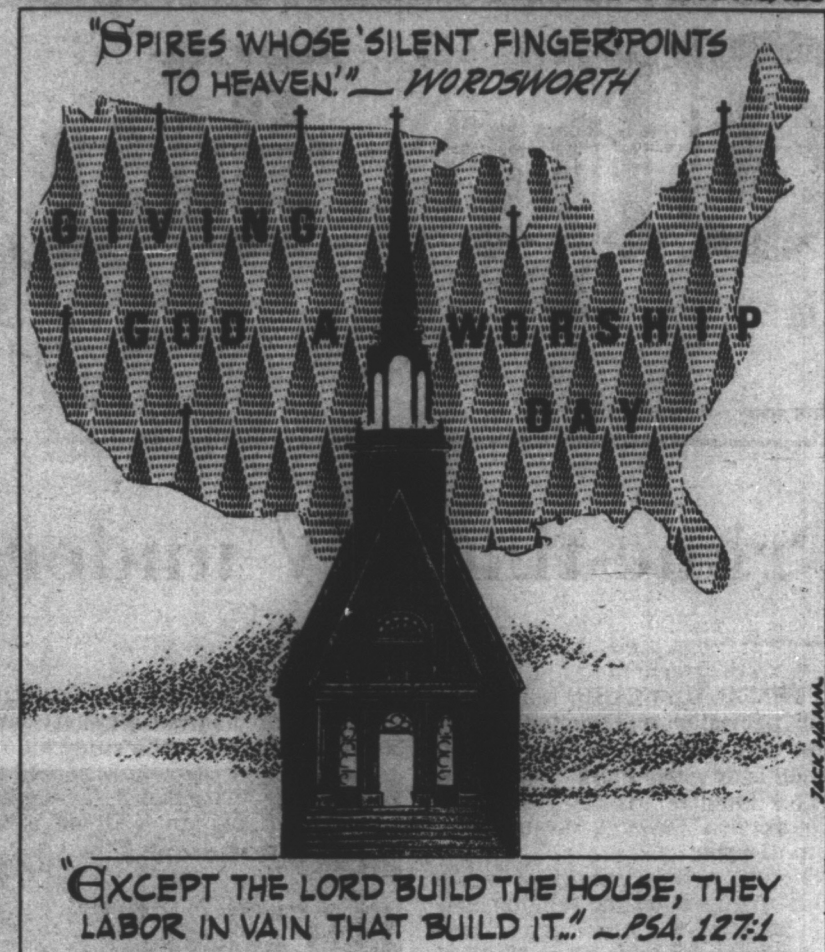
W. A. Criswell, in his *Guidebook for Pastors*, says, "For every congregation through every continuing generation, the truth of God must be relived, re-presented, reincarnated by the preacher." Prepare he must and the congregation must also prepare to hear the Word of God. According to Herschel Hobbs, "Our generation desperately needs to recover the art of worship, but it requires regular practice and participation to be experienced at its best."

Communicating the gospel to our culture is not the easiest thing. A complex society, strange and estranged relationships, plus the baffling problems of society spells out the need of cooperation between the pews and the pulpit. Two hundred minds filled with thoughts of sports, economics, social ills, family relationships, plus the plagues of society await the pastor. They must be corralled and sent Godward: the proud to be brought low, the meek and lowly to be inspired. Only

the gospel as applied by the Holy Spirit can do this. Try to compete with television and you lose. Try to impress with knowledge, and it will not succeed. The only hope for pew and pulpit is the forgiveness, the strength, and the blessings of the Lord.

There were many surrounding Jesus, but only the sick woman, by faith, reached out to touch the hem of his garment. So in worship, hundreds may be present. How many, by faith, will touch Him and be healed? Replaying the mind-tapes of past events will hardly measure up to Isaiah's experience in the temple (Is. 6). Today with our enviable heritage of freedom and individual opportunity, we owe a great debt to the pulpit. Few things have influenced America like the free pulpit and a free people.

How can the pew help the pulpit? Be present with a "what saith the Lord" attitude. Pray for forgiveness, a heart hungry to worship, a listening ear, and a prayer for the speaker. "Feed my sheep" was the command of Jesus to Simon Peter. And if a son comes asking for bread, will ye give him a stone? God can spread the banquet table even in the wilderness and in the dry, barren, and disappointing places in life, God feeds his children.



## Delta dawn

Struggling through the darkness the red glow appeared in the east causing the darkness to flee. I sat in the restaurant and watched the Delta come to life. At times the Delta appears as a faded rose and again it can be as sweet as a magnolia. Today the magnolia appeared.

Topping Broadway hill in Yazoo City you catch your first glimpse of the vast plain reaching from Vicksburg to Tunica. It's 200 miles of catfish farms, soy beans, rice, and cotton. This past fall the cotton fields were bursting white, at times like being in a plane looking down on the clouds.

On the cotton-laced highways you meet some of the strangest looking vehicles since Sherman tanks rolled over France. Cotton pickers, three stories high, combines, hay balers, or stump-splitters, just name it. If it has wheels, it's on a Delta highway. Most of the Delta Air Force was grounded as there is not too much crop spraying in the winter.

Suddenly I see this creature from Mars coming with lights blinking. If it's as wide as it is tall, I'm dead. It has three huge wheels, two creepers in the front, pipes and tubes fore and aft, and a glass enclosed capsule about 6 feet off the ground. I was told this particular model picks three or four rows of cotton at a time, strips the stalk, tenders up the ground for next year, and squashes any insect or ro-

dent in its path. Meanwhile the engineers in the cab have AM/FM radio, and TV enabling them to watch "The Young and the Restless" while assisting the rich and famous.

You can drive through communities with names like Bourbon, Panther Burn, Alligator, Rich, and Lula. Silver City is about as prophetically accurate as Midnight at noon day. How 'bout Brazil in Tallahatchie, or Avon on the Mississippi? Rome, Dublin, Dundee, and Swan Lake all add an international flavor.

On the edge of a cotton field a forlorn church with stunted steeples on each front corner gives testimony. A row of shotgun houses, long forsaken, dot the horizon. You drive into the larger cities to see beautiful homes on shaded streets. Rounded drying towers, storage silos, and butane tanks break the monotony of flatness. Cypress swamps, bird sanctuaries, and high levees separate the various plantations.

The Delta is home to nearly a million people who live near the soil. They watch the weather, cotton futures, price of catfish, and the Dow Jones. They live by faith: faith in God, and faith in the Delta. The rich alluvial soil and sweat have enabled generations since 1800 to feed and clothe part of our nation. We tip our hats to the gracious people who call the Delta "home."

## Tanzanian relief project yields new believers, congregations

By Donald D. Martin

ARUSHA, Tanzania (BP) — The success of Southern Baptist hunger relief in Tanzania can be seen in the grateful eyes of an elderly Maasai man.

"He was gaunt, gray-headed, and very old," recalled Southern Baptist missionary Billy Oliver of Abilene, Texas. "He said his family was hungry and that some of his children were going days without food."

"Before he left with his food, he came over and, with tears in his eyes, expressed his appreciation for what we were doing."

Oliver has distributed more than 500 tons of food to nearly 5,000 families affected by drought in the east African nation. But the face of the Maasai man, locked in an expression of relief and gratitude, lingers in Oliver's mind.

The dilemma the old man faces also oppresses the lives of many other people as the drought tightens its grip on Tanzania's Arusha area.

The dry savanna region, at the base of Africa's tallest mountain, Kilimanjaro, is in its second year of little or no rain. Oliver knows of five starvation deaths in the area.

The \$106,000 hunger relief project became possible because of Southern Baptists' donations channeled through the Foreign Mission Board's hunger relief fund.

Evangelistic efforts among the Arusha and the Maasai have benefited by linking hunger relief to

the local Baptist churches. The most recent result is the opening of a Baptist church Jan. 5. At the first service, 78 Maasai adults attended and 34 of them made professions of faith in Jesus Christ.

"This village church, like almost all the others, started through hunger relief or human needs ministries," Oliver said. "When I have an opportunity to evangelize people, I try to take it. Hunger relief or human needs provide excellent opportunities for evangelism. We want to alleviate hunger but we also want to have an opportunity to preach the gospel."

At each distribution, located in villages scattered throughout the area, Oliver or a church leader begins with a worship service. Oliver estimates they have preached to 1,300

Maasai.

"The cattle have all dried up, most of the calves have died and until the cows have new calves, there's not going to be any milk to drink. Not only is there not a harvest of crops, but there's no milk."

"That's a big problem."

Oliver may request additional hunger relief funds soon. But cash may not be enough. "I'm having a real problem finding food to buy and give out. That's a good indication of the seriousness of the food shortage here." However, the hunger relief project's shortcomings fade compared to the results. "Despite the frustrations, it's wonderful to see people being saved, and when you see doors opening you have to say it's well worth it."

Martin writes for FMB.

**EBF GENERAL SECRETARY 'HANDICAPPED' DUE TO NEW YEAR'S EVE MISHAP: HAMBURG, GERMANY** — The general secretary of the European Baptist Federation (EBF), Karl-Heinz Walter, has had to curtail his intense January travel schedule which included trips to Albania, Russia, and Scotland. He is recuperating following a New Year's Eve mishap in which he injured his right hand. Walter was at home on Dec. 31, using an electrical circular saw. In trying to turn off the saw, he accidentally moved his right hand too close to the saw blade, seriously cutting his thumb and his forefinger. The successful repair surgery required three hours. "Without the use of my right hand, I feel handicapped," he said, "and am unable to travel until the Dorfweil Consultation. I cannot write or type." In spite of the accident, Walter said he has much for which to be thankful. For one thing, Hamburg has the reputation of being "the best city in Germany" for hand surgery, according to Walter. For another, the pain subsided very quickly. The cast is due to be removed about Jan. 20. "My prayer is that I will completely regain feeling in my thumb," said the general secretary.

## Evangelism Conference underway

As we go to press, the state Evangelism Conference is beginning at Temple Church, Hattiesburg. A full news account will be in next week's paper.

## The Baptist Record

VOLUME 115

(ISSN-0005-5778)

NUMBER 50

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$7.35 a year payable in advance. Second class postage paid at Jackson, Mississippi. The Baptist Record is a member of Southern Baptist Press Association.

Editor ..... Guy Henderson  
Associate Editor ..... Anne McWilliams  
Advertising Manager ..... Evelyn Keyes  
Editorial Associate ..... Florence Larrimore  
Circulation Manager ..... Renee Walley  
Bookkeeper ..... Betty Anne Bailey  
Proofreader/Secretary ..... Shannon Simpson  
Editor Emeritus ..... Don McGregor

Baptist Record Advisory Committee: Deborah Brunt, Corinth; Susan Kinton, Walnut Grove; Owen Lusk, Jackson; Randy Turner, Natchez, vice-chairman; Tommy Tutor, Clarksdale, chairman; ex-officio, Evelyn Keyes, secretary, Jackson.  
Postmaster: Send changes of address to The BAPTIST RECORD, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.  
Send news, communications, and address changes to The Editor, Baptist Record P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205



# Romania missionaries protest by resigning

By Mike Creswell



T. and Kathie Thomas

BUCHAREST, Romania (BP) — Charles and Kathie Thomas, Southern Baptist missionaries for 17 years, have resigned from service in Romania to express their opposition to what they term "a hostile takeover" of the Foreign Mission Board.

"The first fruit of this takeover was the defunding of Ruschlikon," the Thomases wrote in their resignation letter dated Jan. 11. They referred to the vote by Foreign Mission Board trustees last October to defund the

Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

Thomas, 42, better known by his nickname, "T," is from Atlanta.

Mrs. Thomas, 43, was born in Cynthiana, Ky., and grew up in South Carolina. They said they would be off the mission field by May 1.

"First, we are saddened and grieved by the power struggle within the Southern Baptist Convention which has resulted in a 'hostile takeover' of the Foreign Mission Board," the couple wrote.

"Our resignation is foremost a protest against what we consider to be a distinctively unchristian strategy through which the conservative element of the Southern Baptist Convention is rapidly transforming much of what we have known as the Southern Baptist expression of the evangelical faith into something which is self-

(See **ROMANIA** on page 10)

The Second Front Page

# The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, January 30, 1992

Published Since 1877

## European leader warns:

# "FMB plan endangers future of mission efforts in Europe"

By Erich Bridges

HAMBURG, Germany (BP) — The emerging philosophy of the Foreign Mission Board "endangers future missionary efforts by Southern Baptists in Europe," warns a European Baptist leader in an open letter to Baptists in Europe and the United States.

"The new mission strategy of the FMB, as it appears to us, has developed as follows: 'We select and decide what is worthy of support and acceptance among Baptists in other parts of the world, as in Europe,'" stated Wiard Popkes, a German Baptist seminary professor and trustee chairman of the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

"Even more: the FMB singles out and determines which voices in Europe are 'true' and which are not," Popkes said in the Jan. 14 letter responding to an earlier open letter to Southern Baptists by FMB trustee chairman Bill Hancock.

"As representatives . . . of the European Baptist Federation (EBF) we cannot but regard this attitude as an unwise mission strategy, not to use stronger words," Popkes said.

The sudden defunding of the Ruschlikon seminary by FMB trustees "cannot be interpreted . . . other than as an expression by the FMB that it does not really want to continue trustful partnership cooperation with the (federation) and its institutions," he concluded. "Such a strategy may turn out to be a tragedy, because it endangers future missionary efforts by Southern Baptists in Europe."

Popkes participated in a Dec. 5-6 dialogue in Richmond, Va., that failed to resolve the funding dispute. The dialogue involved FMB staff, FMB trustees, Ruschlikon seminary leaders, and European Baptist leaders.

The five-page letter from Popkes responds point-by-point to Hancock's widely distributed 10-page letter of Jan. 3. Hancock's letter gives the FMB trustees' reasons for voting to cut off \$365,000 in support for the Ruschlikon seminary's 1992 budget.

About 40,000 copies of Hancock's letter were mailed from Richmond, but a Ruschlikon seminary spokesman said Popkes' response was to go to only about 5,000 selected Baptist leaders in Europe and the United States beginning Jan. 20. David Rogers of Nashville, the seminary's vice president for development, said the seminary trustee leaders felt Hancock's letter should be answered but would not spend the funds to match its distribution.

"Dr. Hancock's (letter) rightly mentions that we, as European leaders, emphasized the element of partnership, not money," Popkes said.

"Any Christian will respect if another has problems of conscience

about where to give his/her money. A different matter though is the question of partnership between Baptist entities. This is the central issue of the whole debate."

The Ruschlikon seminary was begun by Southern Baptist missionaries in 1949 in an effort to unify European Baptists in the wake of two world wars. The Foreign Mission Board deeded the school to the European Baptist Federation in 1989, agreeing to continue major FMB financial support (about a third of the seminary budget) through 1992, with decreasing support extending until 2008. But FMB trustees voted last October to cut off funding.

In his letter, Hancock reviewed the historical, financial, and theological aspects of the seminary from the FMB trustees' perspective, and also addressed "questions of trust."

Hancock questioned the financial feasibility of the seminary and noted it has had major financial problems for two decades in the expensive Swiss economy. Supporting the 48 full-time students enrolled in the seminary last fall cost Southern Baptists \$15,937 per student in Cooperative Program funds, Hancock reported.

Popkes replied it is "quite inadequate" to count only enrollment and cost for full-time students because of the seminary's international character and its numerous special courses, institutes, conferences, and off-campus programs extending throughout Europe. Those programs

include the Summer Institute, which has trained more than 400 East European pastors over the last 14 years, and the International Baptist Lay Institute in Budapest, Hungary, which has enrolled 180 students since opening in 1990.

"The financial problems at Ruschlikon arose in the 1970s when the oil crises cut the value of the U.S. dollar," Popkes said. "Since 1970 the dollar has lost 69% of its value against the Swiss franc."

"This means that today we receive only one-third as many Swiss francs for the same dollar. Like all mission institutions and churches, Ruschlikon is not responsible for international financial crises. It does suffer because of them."

Hancock outlined a list of theological concerns FMB trustees have about Ruschlikon and its faculty members, including the degree of their commitment to evangelism, church growth and conservative theology, their perceived tolerance of liberal theologians, and their use of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professor Glenn Hinson in a teaching post for four months. Hinson is regarded as liberal by many of the trustees.

He also noted the charge by Romanian Baptists that professors from Ruschlikon planted "doubts in their lectures that the Bible is entirely the Word of God."

Responded Popkes: "Ruschlikon (See **EUROPEAN LEADER** on page 8)

## HMB appoints Mississippians

ATLANTA — Mississippi natives Terry Douglas and Loretta Rivers were appointed to mission service by the Home Mission Board, SBC, in December.

Douglas is a graduate of East Texas Baptist University in Marshall and Luther Rice Seminary in Jacksonville, Fla. A native of Sontag, Miss., he has served as a pastor in Louisiana and Pennsylvania. He will leave a position as pastor of First Church, Morgan City, La., to go to the mission field. Douglas will serve in Waverly with his wife, Diann, where he will be director of missions for Southern Tier Association, and she will work in family and church service.

A graduate of the University of Mississippi and New Orleans Seminary, Rivers will serve in New Orleans as assistant director of Carver Baptist Center. A native of Union, she has been a summer missionary in Alaska and Illinois.



Mr. and Mrs. Douglas



Loretta Rivers

## Dispute over BJC fund has Baptist donors worried

By Greg Warner

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) — A dispute over who owns a \$400,000 account on deposit with the Southern Baptist Foundation poses a threat to the work of Baptist foundations around the country, according to some state foundation officials.

The SBC Christian Life Commission has laid claim to the capital-needs fund, which was given to the Baptist Joint Committee by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1964. The CLC has asked the SBC Executive Committee, which approved the original capital-needs allocation, to give the CLC control of the fund.

The Southern Baptist Foundation, which has held the money since 1964, has agreed to let the Executive Committee settle the dispute, and a study committee of the Executive Committee is scheduled to meet Jan. 24 to do just that. The study group's recommendation will be voted by the full Executive Committee in February.

But that has directors of some state-level foundations concerned. A deci-

sion to transfer the money from the Baptist Joint Committee to the CLC could undermine the work of Baptist foundations, they warn.

"The main commodity our Baptist foundations have to offer is trust," wrote Harry Trulove, president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, in a Dec. 23 letter to an Executive Committee official. "Therefore, even if a technicality might conceivably allow a change in the use of funds, and if this change is perceived to have been made as a result of the political process, the results may very well be a substantial loss to Baptist causes."

Through the work of Southern Baptists' 30 state foundations, individual Baptists provide millions of dollars to state and national Baptist agencies through wills and trusts. But the BJC-CLC dispute has some of those donors and potential donors suspicious that their gifts could be reassigned by SBC officials, foundation officials report.

The disputed fund was authorized by the SBC in 1964 so that the Baptist

(See **BJC DISPUTE** on page 9)

## Calvary, Waynesboro, leads state in church study course awards

NASHVILLE — Calvary Church of Waynesboro was first in the state and 19th in the SBC for total study course awards earned in 1990-91 with 659, statistics revealed.

Hinds-Madison Association ranked 19th among all SBC associations with 3,214 study awards earned, according to statistics compiled in the church study course records office at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

New Hope Church of Gulfport ranked second in the state earning study awards with 622, and Temple Church of Hattiesburg was third with 607.

Texas led all states in the Southern Baptist Convention in church study course awards earned for 1990-91 with 75,149. Florida was second with 73,974 awards, and Georgia was third with 56,436.

Mississippi was seventh with 34,843 awards.

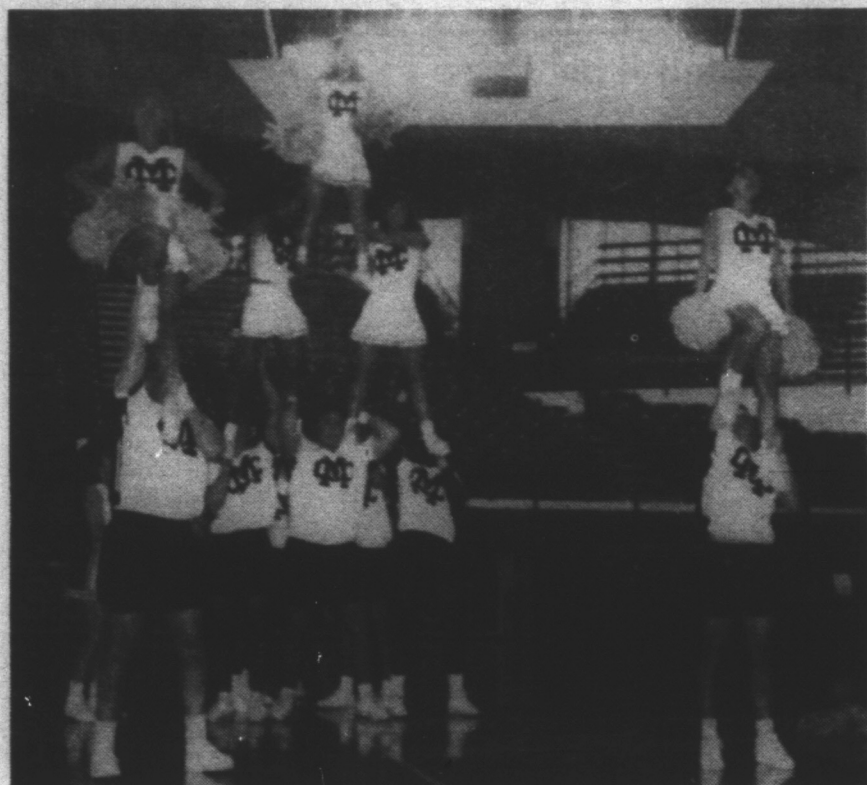
For the second year, First Church

of Jacksonville, Fla., led SBC churches in total study course awards received with 4,214. Second Church of Houston, Texas, was second with 3,926 awards; and Iglesia Bautista Horeb of Hialeah, Fla., was third with 1,504 awards.

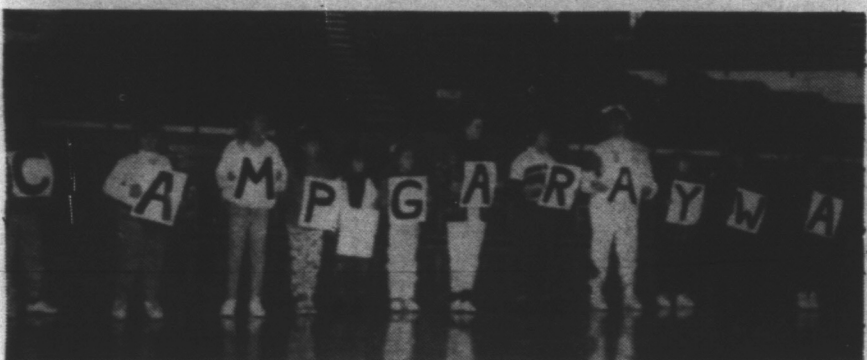
Training activity in churches has shown a decline for two years, according to William R. Cox, church study course coordinator at the board. While the number of persons enrolled in the study course system rose 7% over last year to 1.5 million, the number of total awards earned is down by 7%. The 1990-91 awards total was 688,390 compared to 737,708 in 1989-90.

"I attribute the decline of the past two years to the national economy and to nearing the end of the product cycle for many courses," Cox said. "The church study course system has experienced many ups and downs through the years, but it still remains strong."





MC cheerleaders perform for GAs gathered for GA Day, Jan. 13.



Participants from the audience at GA Day were asked to speak out.



Melinda and Russell Kyzar, furloughing music missionaries to Costa Rica, share their talents.

## 300 girls brave snow for GA Day

More than 700 girls and leaders had pre-registered for GA Day at Mississippi College Coliseum on Saturday, Jan. 13, but snow, sleet, and rain trimmed attendance to a few more than 300.

Russell and Melinda Kyzar, music missionaries in Costa Rica, shared their talents through music. Members of the Lady Chocs gave testimonies. The MC cheerleaders taught cheerleading routines, and the girls put their cheering skills to work during the game between the Lady Chocs and West Georgia.

Other GA Days for girls in grades 1-6 are planned at Central Hills on March 14 and at Camp Garaywa on March 28.

## Danny Jones joins staff of BSSB Church Music Department

Danny R. Jones has joined the staff of the Church Music Department, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, as small church/associational music consultant.

Jones has been a contract consultant for associational music at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Church Music Department since 1988, and has been minister of music and education at Midway Church, Jackson, since 1990. He has had several other part time positions while in graduate

school and seminary.

His wife Bettye has been a secretary in the Church Music Department since 1985.

A native of Germantown, Ky., Jones, 42, has served as minister of music on a full time basis at Griffith Memorial Church, Jackson, 1975-78; Pearson Church, Pearl, 1978-81; and Calvary Church, Greenwood, 1981-85.

He is a graduate of Clarke College and Union University, Jackson, Tenn. He earned the master of music degree from Mississippi College and the master of church music degree from New Orleans Seminary.

Jones has sung with the Mississippi Singing Churchmen since 1975. He and Bettye have two sons, Jeremy, 13, and Jonathan, 11.

# FMB trustees ask Keith Parks to explain, face questions Feb. 10

By Robert O'Brien

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Foreign Mission Board trustee leaders have asked Keith Parks to explain details surrounding a controversial Jan. 7 press conference during which two board executives announced early retirement in protest of trustee actions and policies.

Amid growing tension and speculation about his future, the FMB president will face trustees at a special session of the full board Feb. 10, according to a Jan. 14 letter from trustee chairman Bill Hancock to the 88 trustees.

Hancock's letter said the announcement of retirement by board administrators Isam Ballenger and Keith Parker "has heightened the anxiety and concern of trustees." He also noted he has "received a great deal of counsel" regarding a trustee response in the wake of press reports and reactions from individuals across the Southern Baptist Convention.

Ballenger, 56, vice president for Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, and Parker, 55, area director for Europe, said at the press conference they could no longer represent the agency because of what they termed the trustees' "global agenda" to exert control and enforce theological orthodoxy overseas. Their decision to step down early followed weeks of controversy surrounding trustee votes in October and December to defund the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

Parks, who appeared at the news conference, praised Ballenger and Parker, both veterans of foreign missions, for their integrity and commitment to missions.

Reports have persisted that some will begin efforts — perhaps as soon as the February meeting — to speed up establishment of a search committee to replace Parks, a 37-year veteran

of missions who turns 65 in October. He has been FMB president since 1980.

Last year Parks said he wanted to remain as president until 1995 to implement an ambitious 10-point strategy he outlined for global evangelization. A report in the News Leader, Richmond's afternoon newspaper, said a "coalition of fundamentalist trustees" will report that Parks' leadership will not be necessary to implement his plan.

Earlier Hancock told Baptist Press: "There are some who desire that he (Parks) would go ahead and retire, but my belief is that he should not do so until he chooses. Now is the time to mount a bold offensive to address the mission opportunities in Europe, the former Soviet Union, and around the world rather than to react to past developments and negative attitudes."

O'Brien writes for FMB.

## Cecil Sherman accepts Fellowship job

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) — Cecil Sherman has accepted the invitation to become the first "coordinator" of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Sherman, 64, announced his decision Jan. 26 in a sermon at Broadway Church in Fort Worth, Texas, where he has served as pastor for the past seven years. Sherman will resign and move to Atlanta, headquarters for the Fellowship.

As coordinator, Sherman will provide executive leadership to all Fellowship operations, said John Hewett of Asheville, N.C., the group's moderator. Sherman was offered the newly created, full-time position Jan. 9 by the Coordinating Council of the Fellowship, a coalition of moderate-conservative Baptists.

Sherman told his 2,300-member Fort Worth congregation he struggled with the decision. Although he

regrets leaving, he said, he feels compelled to accept the Fellowship position.

"I feel this is what I'm supposed to be about," he added in an interview with the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. "I'll do the best I can. We have no grand ideas how we can do the job. But we plan to be faithful."

The Fellowship was formed last May by groups that have opposed the leadership of fundamental-conservatives, who since 1979 have gained control of the structure and agencies of the 15 million-member Southern Baptist Convention.

In 1991 the Fellowship distributed \$4.5 million to its own mission causes and to selected causes within the Southern Baptist Convention.

Approximately 500 churches have contributed to the Fellowship and 1,500 churches were represented at the group's assembly last May in Atlanta.

Hewett, pastor of First Church of Asheville, said Sherman will represent the Fellowship to all other Christian groups and to its own constituents — a role Hewett has filled since being chosen for the annually elected position of moderator last May.

Hewett said Sherman will be installed as coordinator during the Fellowship's annual assembly April 30-May 2 in Fort Worth. He also will be replaced as an at-large member on the 82-person Coordinating Council.

The position with the Fellowship would pay Sherman \$100,000 a year in salary and benefits.

Sherman, a native Texan, holds a bachelor's degree from Baylor University, which honored him as a distinguished alumnus Jan. 17. He also has a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary, and doctorates from Princeton University and Southwestern.

## Romanian denies "deal" with FMB

ATLANTA (BP) — Romanian Baptist leader Nic Gheorghita has denied involvement in any "deal" to support the controversial Southern Baptist defunding of the Baptist Theological Seminary in Switzerland in return for major funding for Romanian schools.

But he acknowledged a possible misuse of English, which is not his primary language, may have caused a misunderstanding.

In a Jan. 22 interview with Associated Baptist Press, Gheorghita denied telling Southern Baptist missionary Charles "T" Thomas that Romanian Baptists were "first in line" for the money cut by Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees from the 1992 budget of the seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

"Definitely no, and I am sorry to hear this," said Gheorghita, general secretary of the Romanian Baptist Union, who was contacted in Atlanta while traveling in the United States.

"They did not try to buy us," he told

## Legislative session begins

The 1992 legislature began its scheduled 125-day session Jan. 7. In its first two and a half weeks, over 600 bills have been introduced. Over 3,000 are expected to be filed before the session ends in mid-May. With extraordinary speed, both the Senate and House of Representatives passed SCR 512 which places the vote on a state-operated lottery on the ballot Nov. 4. The lottery resolution was passed without allowing for public input or hearings in either the Senate or the House.

At the same time, many other pieces of legislation have been introduced and need the attention and response of concerned Christians. Legislators can be contacted by calling 359-3770 or writing them at Box 1018, Jackson, MS 39205.

- Addition:** HB 29 would not permit a suspended sentence or parole for selling drugs to minors.
- HB 50 would allow liquor stores to sell party goods.
- HB 85 would prohibit the possession of open container of alcohol by motor vehicle operator.
- HB 207 would prohibit a judge from reducing drunk driving charges.
- SB 2052 would increase penalty for sale of tobacco to minors.
- SB 2152 would allow owners of liquor permits to forego financial disclosure.
- Family:** HB 27 would provide criminal penalties for failure to report a neglected or abused child.
- HB 206 would allow a judge to waive the 60-day waiting period prior to granting a divorce for irreconcilable differences.
- HB 240 would require the registration with law enforcement of all sex offenders.
- HB 262 would create the Infant Mortality Task Force.
- HB 2196 would require AIDS/HIV test on child prior to adoption.
- SB 2225 would define duty to report suspected child abuse/neglect.
- Gambling:** HB 123, 124, & SB 2292 would legalize and regulate video poker devices.
- HB 280 would establish pari-mutuel gambling on dog and horse racing by local option.
- HB 281 and SB 2316 would permit ownership of antique coin machine.
- HB 300 and SB 2059 would revise referendum on legal gambling.
- SB 2060 would authorize fraternal society to operate slot machines.
- SB 2133 and SB 2148 would redefine taxes on bingo games.
- SB 2145 would establish residency requirement for gambling device seller.
- Other:** HB 103 would require a binding referendum prior to municipal annexation.
- HB 200 and SB 2309 would allow non-profit corporations to limit liabilities of directors.
- HB 216 would revise charitable organization regulations.
- SB 2268 would establish the Mississippi Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act.

— Compiled by Paul Jones, director, and Beth Holmes, consultant, Christian Action Commission, MBC



"Communism is not dead," says doctor

# Romanian orphanages overflow with cold, hungry children

By Anne W. McWilliams and Shannon T. Simpson

"It is such misery to be cold and hungry at the same time," said the doctor.

Cornel Petrassevich, retired gynecologist, Philadelphia, Miss., beheld his homeland, Romania, last fall for the first time in 22 years. "My heart aches," he said, "with the memory of what I saw there: widows and orphans, starving and cold; old people in winter, starving, yet so full of dignity. In Bucharest, there are houses full of people, crippled, sick, wounded, dying."

While he was there, friends came to visit him at his hotel. One man was astonished to see a bathroom; he had not bathed in three months. Petrassevich told him to bathe, and gave him a suit of his own clothes. "They do not often bathe, not only because of lack of hot water, but due to danger of going out into the cold from the bath." One man said to him, "Look, I never heard of anyone dying from stinkiness, but from cold, yes."

Petrassevich knows firsthand about cold and hunger and pain. At 2 a.m. on Dec. 19, 1948, Communists arrested him in Romania. For 16 years he stayed in prison, often tortured, always near starvation, sometimes in chains in a windowless room, for long years working in a lead mine.

When at last he was released, he found that his wife had married again, told that he was dead. His property in his home city of Lugoj had been confiscated. His only brother had died in prison. His father and brother-in-law had been arrested and were now dead.

During World War II, he had been an officer in the Strategic Services of the U.S. Army in Romania. He had worked in military hospitals as Romania's chief medical officer for the YMCA.

While in prison, with no books or papers, he gave lectures to the other prisoners from memory on subjects he'd studied in medical school at the University of Bucharest. His faith in God, he has said, kept him alive. As never before, he "felt the vital link between the created and the Creator."

Afterward, through the U.S. Embassy, he was issued a passport, but it was not given to him in the small village where he had been sent to work as "beginning doctor." How he got that passport he will not say, but adds that it was a miracle. On Nov. 3, 1969, he fled to Austria, and from thence to America. He brought with

him his orphaned niece, Silvia.

Now an American citizen, he has worked for the U.S. Public Health Service in five states, including Mississippi, at the Indian hospital at Philadelphia.

With the Berlin Wall down, at last he could go back. But he did not find the Romania of his youth. Of orphanages he visited, one in Lugoj, he said, contained 89 children in one small house, three or four to the bed, "in ruined beds." "They eat only cabbage and oil," which undernourishment, he said, causes liver damage.

"The little girls have lost their femininity because of having to fight with the boys for food and space." An organization in Germany had sent toys for them, but they would not play with them. "They don't want toys. They want mothers and food. They are like dogs in a pound, looking for someone to take them home."



Hunger is worse now, he found, than 22 years ago. Then it was still possible to find food. Sometimes then, society women (when it was still an educated society) would take jobs as street sweepers so they could wear long skirts with pockets in them, to hide milk bottles as trucks delivered milk and foodstuff at night. They would feed their families and sell the rest on the black market. But now there is no milk, and only a little bread.

Most important, when he went back, he said, "I learned that Communism is not dead. Only the party name is dead. 'Salvation Front' is the new name for the party, but the old structures are still in place, as is the regime of terror and starvation. The hunger is not by accident, but by design, for suppressing people. Communism is still killing people, only killing in different ways. It is a false idea that democracy is now in place in Russia and eastern Europe. Properties are still owned by the state. They have not been returned to their owners."

The doctor added, "My duty is to tell the truth about oppression. I am an old man and I cannot lie."

As a solution for the chaos and social disorder, people, especially the older ones, want the return of their king. Michael I still lives in exile in Switzerland with his wife Queen Anne, who is of French-Danish descent. They are asking for a constitutional monarchy as in Spain, England, and Norway. They feel that this would bring them more stability, and the king would act as arbiter. Also they believe it would elevate Romania in Western eyes.

But don't they have more freedom now? Especially freedom of religion? "Freedom!" the doctor scoffed. "They are free only to bark. When you are

starving, with no medicine, why do you go to church? You are worried about feeding your family. Spiritual food must be given after the body is satisfied. The problem is not just misery, but the problem is survival itself. This is the war: to survive. It is a very hard spiritual life. If I tried to explain pain to you, I could describe all the things about pain, but until you feel it, you would not truly know what is pain."

In 1948, the Soviets cracked down on the Byzantine Rite Greek (Catholic) Church, to which he belonged. Their buildings were taken over and closed; their bishops and nuns were killed or imprisoned after the British and American forces left Romania. Now Petrassevich asks, "What is free? Church buildings that bishops have been permitted to re-enter have everything in them broken. They are still state-owned. The starving bishops have nowhere to live. What is free?"

He told of visiting a Baptist church in Furlug, which was flourishing, but only because there was much American money sent to help.

How can Americans help Romania? Here are some of his suggestions:

1. Send clothes and/or food for orphans and old people. See instructions elsewhere on this page.

He made a special request for aid to the widows, orphans, and grandchildren of survivors of prison camps: Associational Forum of Political Prisoners. Their special needs, he said, are for food, medicine, walking canes, coats, and vitamins to restore the liver.

2. Invest in their industries, to give new life to their country, not only in money but also with knowledge, tools, and resources, for Romania has for many years been cut off from the literature of the West.

3. Place more stress on teaching children languages and history. Show them that man is more than an animal, that he has a spiritual life, and aspires to great things. Also, true education would show all sides of such

## Romanians wrestle with "freedom"

By Dan Wooding

Christmas day 1989 marked the execution of Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena, who died in a hail of bullets from Romanian soldiers. That day was to herald an unprecedented time of prosperity and freedom for the much-oppressed land in Central Europe.

The so-called "velvet revolution," sparked by the courage of Timasoura pastor Lazlo Tokes, ended with the election of President Ion Iliescu. It had been greeted by many in the West as a triumph for democracy.

Now, for many in Romania, especially Christians, democracy has turned sour. The promised political reforms have not materialized as many hoped.

Iliescu has not managed to fulfill promises he made during his power play to take control of the country. The Romanian church with its instant, absolute liberty is having great difficulty knowing how to channel its energies

Thursday, January 30, 1992

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 5



Anca Voinescu, dentist from Romania, and Cornel Petrassevich, retired doctor, stand on the deck of his lakeside home in Philadelphia. Formerly of Romania, Petrassevich is a member of the board of trustees of the American College of International Physicians. With statuary, fountains, and swans, he has created a bit of Europe in Mississippi.

### Items needed by orphanages in Romania:

Food  
Flannel clothes, for ages 3-7  
Foam mattresses and bed frames for juvenile beds  
Sheets  
Blankets  
Medicines, especially antibiotics and vitamins

### Address of one orphanage:

Casa de Copii Prescolari  
Jtr. Bucesti No. 37  
1800 Lugoj  
Romania

Suggestions: Gifts may be sent to the above orphanage in care of Dr.

Lucy and Dr. George Platon, physicians who are sister and brother-in-law of Cornel Petrassevich (see story on this page). They will supervise the giving of food and gifts to each child directly. It is possible to "adopt" a specific child, to watch his progress. Caution: It is best not to send money.

Checks may be sent to Baptist World Aid, marked either for the Romanian Aid Fund (a general fund) or for the Romania Orphanage Fund, Baptist World Alliance, 6733 Curran St., McLean, VA 22101-3804. Or they may be sent to the World Hunger Fund, Foreign Mission Board, SBC, P. O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230, designated in letter or on check for Romania.

tragic events as befell Romania, so they might be prevented from happening again in future.

Petrassevich in lectures across the United States has reminded Americans that the U.S. and the United Kingdom "have a moral obligation to eastern Europe, because it was offered on the altar at the Yalta Conference after World War II."

Romanians were America's allies and defenders and yet "were given over to the Communists and their cruelty."

He said he feels that "a Christian nation has not lost its sense of responsibility for abandonment of all these human beings," but that "this is the greatest concept of Christian culture in the United States, to make reparations for these cruelties."

effectively.

"What political reforms?" asked one highly-respected Christian leader, who wished to remain unnamed. "The government here is still communist. Iliescu keeps lying to us. Things are not improving. We have members of the secret police in our church services. I know who they are. They have even gone so far as to take pictures of each member of our congregation as they left the building following a Sunday morning service."

This disturbing situation was revealed in January 1992 to a team from ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in Strategic Times), a Southern California-based ministry, visiting the country to bring gifts from American Christians of food, medicine, and cash, as well as literature and other worship aids.

In response to political confusion about their new-found freedom, whether it will last, and to the prob-

lem of how to deal with the influx of Western Christian "outsiders," the church in Romania, according to ASSIST staffer Gary Skaggs, has "grown much too rigid to deal effectively with people's everyday problems." He said, "Becoming more religious rather than more liberated has weakened the church in its struggle to come out of its closet of oppression and bring redemption to the spiritually-oppressed seekers."

Skaggs, who made a similar trip to Romania in 1991, went on to say: "We absolutely do not want to 'westernize' the Romanian church, but they do need... our fervent prayers and financial help to plant new churches that will be able to deal more effectively with these new problems.... Without more informed and consistent prayers, and financial help, the Christian church in Romania will likely continue to get weaker before it is (See "FREEDOM" on page 10)

### An appeal

Two Romanian friends of Cornel Petrassevich are in Mississippi now. Mariana Porumb, doctor living in Kosciusko, who studied opera, is available for singing engagements and/or testimonies.

Anca Voinescu, who will be in Philadelphia 2-3 months, dental surgeon from Bucharest and former student of Petrassevich, wants to continue to live in the United States so that her 8-year-old son, Alexander, can go to school here, and also so that the two of them could have a better life than in Romania. However, she needs a license to practice medicine in the U.S. In the meantime, she wants to be employed as dental assistant so she can earn a living while she studies for the licensure. For more information about either, contact Petrassevich at 524 Blount St., Philadelphia, MS 39350 (656-3670 or 656-2440).





**A TIME FOR PRAYER** — In the former Soviet republic of Georgia, Christian believers pray fervently during Sunday morning worship services. Disciplined, heartfelt prayer like this is an ingredient Southern Baptists are beginning to envision as a visual strategy in their foreign mission efforts. (BP photo by Don Rutledge)

## Dockery's father-in-law murdered in Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)** — William Huckleba, father-in-law of David S. Dockery, general editor of *The New American Commentary* at the Baptist Sunday School Board, was robbed and killed Jan. 24 outside his home in the Bush Hills area of Birmingham.

The murder occurred the day Dockery was interviewed by Southern Seminary's 70-member faculty in Louisville, Ky., in connection with seminary officials' plans to nominate him as dean of the school of theology.

Huckleba, 76, and a deacon at Hunter Street Church, was shot multiple times in the upper body by a gunman who approached him outside his home, according to *The Birmingham News*.

The newspaper reported Huckleba had just returned from a nearby bank where he had deposited his retirement check. He had stopped at home to pick up his wife, Polly, so the two could visit friends.

While he waited on his wife, the gunman approached his vehicle. A family friend said the victim's wife saw the man and heard her husband yell for her to call the police. When she turned to call, the man shot Huckleba, the friend said.

Huckleba was taken to Baptist Medical Center-Princeton where he was pronounced dead at 5:03 p.m.

The newspaper said Birmingham police were looking possibly for two

men in connection with the slaying. A lifelong resident of Bush Hills, Huckleba was retired from the U.S. Navy and TCI Cable.

He is survived by his wife; a daughter, Lanese Dockery of Nashville; and two sons, Paul Huckleba of Pensacola, Fla., and David Huckleba of Columbia, Md.

Concerning Dockery's Jan. 24 interview with the faculty, Honeycutt said, "We have every reason to be positive about the prospects of his election by the trustee executive committee to a tenurable position on the New Testament faculty." However, he said, "I think it would be inappropriate to speculate any further since that might presume upon both the trustees and Dr. Dockery."

An interview with the faculty is part of an advisory process to the seminary provost in the selection of new faculty members. In a Jan. 20 news story, Baptist Press quoted a seminary spokesman as saying a vote is taken in such faculty interviews. However, seminary officials clarified Jan. 27 that no formal vote is involved.

Honeycutt and the seminary's provost, Larry L. McSwain, have confirmed they intend to nominate Dockery as dean of the school of theology once he is elected to the faculty during the trustees' Feb. 3-4 meeting and then voted on for tenure during their April 27-29 meeting.

Dockery would become dean of the school of theology Aug. 1.

## Teen suicide: "A real problem" that churches, parents can change

By Mark Wingfield

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP)** — More American teenagers will die this year at their own hands than from cancer, heart disease, influenza, and pneumonia combined.

While many child-killing diseases have been cured in the past 30 years, the suicide rate among American teens has been steadily increasing, according to data from the National Center for Health Statistics.

Since 1960, the rate of children ages 10-19 dying of cancer has been cut in half, the number dying of heart disease has been reduced more than half, and deaths from influenza and pneumonia have been reduced 80%.

During the same period, however, teen suicide rates have more than tripled. Suicide is now the third most frequent killer of America's teenagers, behind accidents and homicide.

Nationwide, suicide rates are about 1.4 per 100,000 among youth ages 10-14, 11.3 per 100,000 for 15- to 19-year-olds, and 15 per 100,000 for 20- to 24-year-olds.

The casualty rate is highest among white males. Girls make more suicide attempts, but boys tend to succeed more often by using more lethal means.

Teen suicide is "a real problem," said Audrey Puryear, director of community services with Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children in Louisville.

"If we believe the report that one out of every seven youths has attempted suicide, . . . then we really need to sit up and pay attention," she said.

"I guarantee you, any youth group you go into, if you could get them to speak openly and honestly, you would find a significant number who are feeling depressed and you would find kids who are thinking about suicide.

"They may not have a plan, but they are at least thinking about that as a solution to their problems."

"There is little reason to believe the

problem of suicide is diminishing," added Richard Ross, youth ministry consultant with the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn. "The factors in the home and in society that contribute to suicide all seem to be as strong as ever."

Both Ross and Puryear believe parents and church leaders should be prepared to deal with suicidal teenagers.

Ross said he has been reminded about the need for such counseling in churches by the overwhelming response to a Sunday School Board product called the "24-hour Counselor." Two components of this audiotape counseling series are titled "I No Longer Want to Live" and "My Friend May Commit Suicide."

About 500,000 teens have anonymously picked up the counseling tapes in their churches.

"I have received many letters and stories from teenagers on the verge of suicide who chose not to take their lives because of the counseling they received through an audiotape," Ross explained. "We have never put anything in print that teenagers would pick up by themselves on the subject of suicide. But by the thousands they are picking up the audiotapes on suicide."

Puryear said suicide is only one of many at-risk behaviors teens face.

However, the risk of suicide increases as the number of other at-risk behaviors a teen has increases.

Research has identified four assets that significantly reduce such at-risk behaviors, she said. Those assets are good family relationships, a positive school environment, a good environment for community activities, and involvement in a church or synagogue.

Children with all four assets in place would be least at risk, but even one positive asset can make a big difference, she said. The positive in-

fluence of a church can make the difference for a child with poor family relationships, a bad school, and a bad community, she said.

Both parents and church youth leaders have roles to play in preventing teen suicide, Ross said.

"Church leaders definitely need to provide parent education experiences that help parents identify and respond to suicidal tendencies," he suggested. "Church leaders need to nurture relationships between teenagers and youth workers that make it more likely that teenagers will talk about significant personal issues with key adults."

"Church leaders need to deal with guilt and moral failure. Church leaders need to introduce lost teenagers to Christ as the ultimate reason for living."

Parents, on the other hand, "should begin at birth to strengthen within a child a biblically sound and healthy sense of self-worth," Ross said. "During adolescence, parents should work very hard at keeping lines of communication open."

Further, parents should "build their schedules and lifestyles to make communication more likely," he said. "If you stay at the office until 10 every night, you're probably not going to have a clue what's going on in your teenager's life."

Ross also affirmed church youth workers by saying the ongoing ministry of the church is a preventative measure against teen suicide.

"James Dobson uses the analogy of a cliff. He says churches often become preoccupied with running ambulances back and forth picking up teenagers at the bottom of the cliff. But there is a greater need for someone to go up to the top of the cliff and build a fence."

"The fence at the top of that cliff," Ross said, "is the ongoing youth ministry of the church."

Wingfield is news director of *WESTERN RECORDER*, Kentucky.

## Chairman Hankins says CP summit talks find consensus among leaders

By Herb Hollinger

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — A summit meeting of Southern Baptist leadership concerning the denomination's unified giving plan found "enthusiastic support for and commitment to" the Cooperative Program, says the chairman of the meeting.

Two dozen past and present denominational leaders at state convention and SBC levels were invited to the Jan. 20-21 meeting in Nashville by David E. Hankins, chairman of the SBC Executive Committee.

Hankins appointed the special study group in response to action and concerns of the Executive Committee in September.

"I was very grateful to those who came," Hankins, pastor of Trinity Church in Lake Charles, La., told Baptist Press following the meeting. "We were helped greatly by the state convention executive directors and by our former SBC leadership. Their historical insights were particularly helpful to me."

The outcome of the meeting, Hankins said, was "enthusiastic support by those attending for the support of and commitment to the cooperative

concept of missions with state conventions and the SBC working as partners to promote missionary work on both levels.

"There was a good, affirming spirit for the leadership at the various levels," Hankins said. The group also expressed sympathy, he added, for the various struggles, economic and others, which have raised concerns in the cooperative effort.

"There was unanimous agreement to move ahead (in promotion and support of the Cooperative Program)," Hankins said.

Future small group meetings — possibly regional gatherings — between Executive Committee leadership and state officials also were suggested. The Executive Committee plans the national Cooperative Program allocation budget while state conventions determine the percentage to be channeled to the national CP from gifts received by churches in their states.

The consensus of the group is that while churches and individuals should be free to direct their funds as they wish, Hankins said, the best way to do "our work is through a unified giving

plan from the churches to the state conventions, then to the national convention to be distributed to the various agencies."

Attending the meeting were state convention executive directors William M. Pinson Jr., Texas; James N. Griffith, Georgia; Reginald M. McDonough, Virginia; Cecil C. Sims, Northwest; Don Moore, Arkansas; John Sullivan, Florida; Roy J. Smith, North Carolina; Charles Sullivan, Indiana; and A. William Merrell, an Oklahoma convention officer.

Southern Baptist Convention leadership included President Morris H. Chapman of Wichita Falls, Texas; former presidents W. Wayne Dehoney, Louisville, Ky.; and James L. Sullivan of Nashville.

SBC agency officials included R. Keith Parks, president, Foreign Mission Board, and Larry Lewis, president, Home Mission Board.

Stewardship Commission officials were A.R. Fagan, president, and James L. Powell, vice president for Cooperative Program promotion.

Hollinger is director of Baptist Press.



## Esteen Quinn to retire



"Retirement will be a new chapter, and I am looking forward to it." That's Esteen Quinn's attitude. Her new chapter will open Feb. 1, when she retires as administrative assistant to the executive director, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. A reception in her honor is to be held Jan. 31 at the Baptist Building.

In the 28 years since Jan. 7, 1964, she has worked with four executive directors, Chester Quarles, Douglas Hudgins, Earl Kelly, and Bill Causey. She worked a few months in what was called the Temperance Department. Then Quarles asked her if she would transfer to his office.

Of her, Causey said, "She is an absolutely marvelous secretary and associate, and a truly outstanding Christian. How she can do her work here so well and still do all the work that she does in her church as well, I don't know. She is a remarkable person."

Her favorite part of this job has been meeting people, she said: "I like people, and there are many wonderful ones all over the state that I have met here by letter or phone or in person."

One major accomplishment that she achieved during her office career required a lot of determination and stickability. While working full time, she also earned three college degrees — an A.A. from Hinds Community College, a bachelor of arts from Belhaven with a major in humanities; and a master of arts from Mississippi College in community counseling. Nearly all of this was done in night classes. "I love to study," she said.

At Alta Woods Church, Jackson, where she has been a member since 1964, she teaches senior adults in Sunday School and is chairman of the Nominating Committee. Her husband, Harry, is a deacon, leader of Royal Ambassadors, teacher of eighth grade boys, and chairman of the Passenger Vehicle Committee. Harry, already retired from Armstrong World Industries after 41 years, often drives kindergartners and other groups to various places.

Actually, I've known Esteen longer than 28 years. When W. D. and I moved to south Jackson in 1958, she was

church secretary at Daniel Memorial Church. I remember teaching a WMU mission study at her house when she was chairman of the Jane McRae Circle. While I was GA director at Daniel, her daughter, Beverly, was a GA. When I led a group of fifth graders in Church Training, her son, Clay, was a member of that group. Now Beverly (Weeks) and her husband Steve live at Ridgeland and have three boys. Clay and his wife Donna live at Raymond. They have three girls.

She was born Esteen Adams at McComb. Her father died when she was 9. Later, when her mother remarried, she acquired a brother. She started to school at Enterprise, was graduated from high school at Bogue Chitto, and lived at Brookhaven a bit between those two.

It was during World War II, at a basketball game at Bogue Chitto, that Esteen met Harry. "Who is that good looking soldier over there?" she asked a friend. "Go tell him there are some extra seats over here!" And so it worked out that he sat between her and another girl, and she began talking to him. A year later, on Nov. 18, 1945, she married him in a ceremony at her home. During that war, he was injured in Normandy.

In recent years, she and Harry have traveled to Normandy, as well as to Germany, Switzerland, France, Austria, the British Isles, Greece, and Israel. Last year they flew to Alaska on volunteer mission to teach VBS.

One young man in their church told her, "Harry is the person I would most like to be like. He's great in so many ways, and yet he's so down to earth." And she agrees, "I have a wonderful husband."

Her degree in counseling led her to begin giving volunteer time to Contact Crisis Intervention (counseling by telephone). This she plans to continue.

Where her husband likes fishing, hunting, and sports, Esteen likes reading, walking, and entertaining guests. One leisure activity, though, for sure, she and Harry agree upon: "We'll probably sleep until lunch every day." Also she admits she'll like having more time for her grandchildren.

Can you imagine Esteen without a smile? I couldn't count the times I've gone to her to seek information. Never — never — have I seen her act irritable. Always she responds to every inquiry with calmness, cheerfulness, and cordiality.

I wish her joy in retirement; at the same time I'm wondering what I'll do without her down there to answer my questions. Yet change is a part of life, and Esteen's favorite Bible verse (Hebrews 13:8) deals with that very thing: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Like she said, "It's wonderful to know that even though we change, He never does and never shall — and we can depend on that."

**URGENT CALL ISSUED FOR CHINA PERSONNEL: HONG KONG (BP)** — Southern Baptists' priority to meet opportunities in newly opened Soviet and Eastern European states may have taken the spotlight off work in China, steering volunteers away from growing opportunities there. Hong Kong-based officials with Cooperative Services International are issuing an urgent plea for more workers in China. The Southern Baptist humanitarian aid organization asks Southern Baptists not to lose sight of CSI's China efforts in their rush to help Eastern Europeans behind the now-crumbled Iron Curtain. "Many of our teachers say they've rediscovered the joy of teaching in China," Jack Shelby said. "They find Chinese students more responsive and eager to learn than students typically are in the United States. They enjoy teaching more from that standpoint. Our teachers also have told us repeatedly they have more opportunities to witness in China than in their classrooms at home."

Thursday, January 30, 1992

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 7

## Inerrancy: not a "preacher fight"

By William H. Stephens  
(Part one of a three-part series)

NASHVILLE — "That inspiration fight is a preacher fight." The issue arose in my Sunday School class last October during the Life and Work unit on the Bible. My class members seemed to enjoy the study, but they also are a bit impatient at how thin we slice the cheese in discussing inspiration. Why complicate the matter, their reasoning goes. Either you believe the Bible or you don't.

A person's view of inspiration becomes particularly important when a tough question comes up in Bible study. Here are a few examples:

— If you do not interpret "day" in Genesis 1 as a literal 24-hour period, do you believe the Bible?

— Second Samuel 10:18 has 700 charioteers killed; 1 Chronicles 19:18 has 7,000.

— Genesis 11:26,32 and 12:4 state that Terah lived 60 years after Abraham left Haran; Acts 7:4 says Abraham left Haran after Terah died.

— Matthew 27:9 quotes words which it says were spoken by Jeremiah, but the text appears instead in Zechariah 11:12-13.

— First Kings 6:2 says Solomon's Temple was 30 cubits high; 2 Chronicles says 120 cubits.

— Second Kings has Ahaziah's age at 22 when he began to reign; 2 Chronicles has 42.

Several books are on the market today which attack the Bible's truthfulness. "You either believe the Bible or you don't" does not answer their challenges.

How a person deals with these apparent problems depends on his or her view of inspiration. Some Bible-believing laypersons shrug and point out how trivial such matters are. Little do they know that this is precisely the answer given by "limited inerrantists" and "functional inerrantists." These views hold that the Bible con-

tains errors of scientific, historical, and numerical details, but it is inerrant in matters relating to salvation and right living.

These two terms are used by David Dockery in "The Doctrine of the Bible," the Baptist Doctrine Study book for the 1992 emphasis slated for April 20-24 on the SBC calendar. Dockery identifies three views more conservative than limited and functional inerrancy among which most Southern Baptists would place themselves.

The "naive inerrancy" view, usually called the dictation view, or by detractors the typewriter view, is the most conservative. It holds that God dictated word for word the text he wanted, with little or no involvement of the human writer in the process. John R. Rice held this view.

"Absolute inerrancy" allows for more human involvement but insists that all statements of science and history are exact and true. For example, this view requires that "day" in Genesis 1 be interpreted only as a literal 24-hour period. Harold Lindsell holds to this position.

Dockery identifies his own view as "balanced inerrancy." This view insists that every word in Scripture is the word God wanted but that God worked through human authors in such a way that we can identify their personalities, ranges of knowledge, and other human factors. Dockery is concerned that the naive and absolute views sometimes force the Bible to say what it does not mean to say. The Bible is no more precise than it intended to be; sometimes numbers, dates, etc., are rounded off or are meant to be general rather than literal (as when we say "decade" we do not always absolutely mean 10 years). Such modern champions of orthodoxy as Carl F. H. Henry and Millard Erickson hold this view.

All three of these conservative ways which maintain full verbal inspiration. They would, however, have heated arguments among themselves, though in most cases there would be no breach of fellowship.

In popular discussions of inspiration, these differences among scholars and leaders often are ignored. A word or phrase we hear may cause us to attribute a view to someone which he actually does not hold. The current climate of debate on biblical inspiration makes The Doctrine of the Bible an important book for churchwide study.

If we clarify our views, we can maintain and even restore broken fellowship. Beyond that, serious Bible study by Sunday School teachers and indeed all believers requires each of us to think through our views of inspiration. In a world which increasingly challenges the truthfulness of Scripture, we should "correctly handle the word of truth" and "be prepared to give an answer" in regard to our faith.

Those who hold to naive, absolute, and balanced inerrancy would separate themselves from most of those who hold to limited and certainly to functional inerrancy, and from those more liberal views which I have not mentioned. They do so because of basic differences in approach to Scripture. As Dockery's book demonstrates, views of inspiration move along a scale of gradations from very conservative to very liberal. The Doctrine of the Bible will help believers decide where to draw the line and, of equal importance, what views not to reject.

Stephens is senior curriculum development coordinator in the Sunday School Board's Discipleship Training Department which sponsors Baptist Doctrine Study.

## Supreme Court to hear abortion case

By Tom Strobe

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Supreme Court's announcement it will hear arguments concerning a state abortion-restriction law elicited one area of agreement among pro-life and pro-choice advocates — the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision declaring a constitutionally protected right to abortion is near its demise.

"Roe's days are numbered," said Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the Christian Life Commission. "It is only a matter of time until the court puts an end to the national disgrace of abortion on demand. We hope Roe has no 20th anniversary."

"We are on the edge of a legal precipice, facing a future without the right to choose," said Kate Michelman, executive director of the National Abortion Rights Action League. "Losing this right is no longer distant and inconceivable — because of President Bush, it is immediate and inevitable."

"Basically, they've left us guessing as to what they've done," said Leanne McCoy, a lawyer for Americans United for Life, recognized as the legal arm of the pro-life movement. "It sounds narrow by the way they've worded it, but they're not exactly limiting themselves" from considering the broader issues.

"I think there's a good likelihood" the court will deal with Roe in some manner, McCoy said.

Even if the court does not reverse

Roe in the Pennsylvania case, both sides of the debate have indicated they believe it will be overturned soon, probably in the following term, in

cases involving statutes in Louisiana, Utah, and the territory of Guam.

Strobe is director, media and news information, Washington office, CLC.

## CLARKE COLLEGE

Newton, MS

### SPRING PREVIEW DAY SCHEDULE

-Wednesday, February 12, 9:30 a.m.

-Thursday, March 19, 10:30 a.m.

\*Saturday, April 11, 9:30 a.m.

\*(Alumni Homecoming)

save this schedule

### PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ No. in your group \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Clip and mail to: Clarke College, P.O. Box 440, Newton, MS 39345  
(601)683-2061



## North Delta distributes 105 Christmas baskets



Oakhurst Acteens helped distribute baskets.

The North Delta Association recently sponsored a successful Christmas basket project. They prepared and distributed 105 baskets of food which served 363 persons. They actually gave enough staple foods for these families for one week, plus a hen for Christmas dinner. Included in these baskets were Christmas greeting cards to share and bags of bows for their own gifts, donated by Acme Picture Frame of Tutwiler.

In November, the Ministry Center Committee contacted the churches of the association about what to bring and every church responded. The committee was also given the canned goods from the community's annual Thanksgiving service.

Under the direction of Charles and Ruby Shelton of Oakhurst Church,

daily volunteers in the ministry center, and with the help of many other volunteers, the baskets were distributed in the center. A gospel tract was included in every basket.

Two weeks before food distribution, Acteens from Oakhurst Church spent a Saturday sorting all the toys according to the age of a child. When the 47 families picked up the food, they also chose the toys for their own children.

During November and December, the people of the community received 44,000 pounds of mayonnaise and tartar sauce free.

M. C. Johnson, executive secretary for North Delta Association, commented, "It is truly marvelous what can be done when we have 100% participation from our churches for the glory of the Lord."

## Names in the news

The Baptist Medical/Dental Fellowship, at its 15th annual meeting in Dallas recently, unanimously adopted a resolution commending W. W. Walley, president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. The resolution also congratulated the Mississippi Baptist Convention for its choice of leadership and pledged to pray for the Medical/Dental fellow during his tenure.

Moody Adams, an evangelist, will be the guest speaker at Meadow Grove Church, Brandon, on Feb. 2. The topic of his sermon at the 11 a.m. service will be "The New World Order," at 6 p.m., "High Tech Corruption of America's Children," and 7 p.m. will be "Russian Revolution and Bible Prophecy." Adams has conducted 176 area crusades in the last 33 years. Ricky E. Kennedy is pastor of Meadow Grove Church.

The Mississippi College Department of Music will present tenor Kevin Crain of Florence in junior recital on Jan. 30, at 8:15 p.m. in Aven Auditorium on campus. There is no admission charge. Crain's program will consist of compositions by Brahms, Faure, Head, and Schubert and is given in partial completion of the bachelor of arts in vocal performance degree. Crain is a student of Gerald Claxton, assistant professor of music. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. James R. Crain of Florence.

Bennie Crockett, associate professor of religion and philosophy and associate dean of the college at William Carey, presented a paper at the third biennial meeting of the Baptist Association of Philosophy Teachers. The meeting was held at Georgetown College in Georgetown, Ky., on Nov. 15-17. Crockett's paper was entitled "The Possibility of Altruism as an Expression of Love."

Bob and Jan Salley, music evangelists, recently presented a concert at Clarke College. The Salleys are residents of Senatobia. He is employed by the Brotherhood Commission, SBC. The two travel nationwide presenting concerts of Christian music.

R. Philip Roberts has been named Director of Southeastern Seminary's Center for Great Commission Studies. President Lewis A. Drummond has announced this appointment, to be effective January 1993. Roberts holds the master of divinity degree from Southern Seminary and the doctor of theology degree from the Free University of Amsterdam. He has served as pastor in Germany, England, and Belgium and taught evangelism at Southern Seminary, 1982-1985. He has been Professor of Evangelism at Southeastern since January 1990. The Center for Great Commission Studies was founded in April of 1991 with the vision to involve students academically and engage them first-hand in evangelism and discipleship around the world.

## Staff changes

Mike A. Gonzales II, 26, has accepted the position of minister of youth at First Church, Laurel. He is a graduate of University of Southern Mississippi and New Orleans Seminary. His previous place of service was Riverside Church, New Orleans. He is the son of Mike and Noemi Gonzales, home missionaries on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Oakdale Church, Brandon, has called Michael Hudson as full-time minister of music and youth, effective Feb. 16. Hudson is a native of Alabama and formerly served at Westwood Church in Selma. He holds degrees from Samford University and New Orleans Seminary. Michael Weeks is pastor.

Carolyn Morgan, secretary at Providence Church, Hattiesburg, is now working full-time. She worked part-time from March to December, 1991. She received her education at Mississippi University for Women.

James D. Hayes, minister of music at First Church, Hattiesburg, retired Dec. 31, 1991. Hayes served the Hattiesburg congregation for 23 years.



Hayes

Hayes continues to be active in mission activities and is available for choral clinics and supply work.

Dale Gravatt has accepted Wells Station Church, Memphis, Tenn., as pastor, effective Jan. 1. A native of Memphis, he received his education at Mid-South Bible College. His previous place of service was Holcomb Church, Grenada Association, for 6½ years.

## Lamar Brotherhood rally planned Feb. 15

Lamar Association is sponsoring a Brotherhood rally for men and boys to be held Feb. 15 at First Church, Sumrall, from 5 until 8 p.m. All Royal Ambassadors and Baptist Men are invited, according to Doug Benedict, director of missions.

Paul Harrell, director, Brotherhood Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, will speak. The Lamar Association Quartet will sing.

The meeting will begin with a Missions Fair. A barbecue dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m. (cost \$3.00). The state disaster van will be on display.

## HMB postpones witness program

The Home Mission Board's 1992 personal witnessing seminar, "Building Witnessing Relationships," originally scheduled for Feb. 7-10 in Meridian, has been postponed to Nov. 16-18.

Conducted at the Baptist Building in Jackson, it will be led by Jack Smith, the program's developer. For more information, call the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, (601) 968-3800.

## Dale Moody dies of heart attack

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Dale Moody, noted Southern Baptist theologian and professor, died Jan. 22 from a heart attack.

Moody, who would have turned 77 on Jan. 27, was a faculty member at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., from 1948-84. He suffered the fatal attack in a Louisville hospital less than an hour before he was scheduled to undergo a heart bypass operation.

Moody's broad expertise in biblical theology and engaging teaching style made him much in demand as a speaker in settings ranging from scholarly ecumenical gatherings to local congregations. In 1969-70, he became the second Protestant and the first Baptist invited to lecture at the Gregorian University in Rome. He was a research professor at the Institute for Advanced Theological

Study in Jerusalem in 1973 and 1976.

During the 1960s and '70s, he served as a member of the Faith and Order Commission of The World Council of Churches.

"The death of Professor Dale Moody marks the passing of a premier member of the faculty whose life-long contribution places him among a select group of stellar professors," said Southern Seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt, adding as a beginning seminary student he took every class Dale Moody taught and read books Moody recommended. "I continued throughout my life to respect him for his scholarship, his love for the church and the seminary, and especially for his devotion to his calling as a minister of the gospel and professor of theology."

## Two Annuity Board funds set records in 1991

By Tim Tune

DALLAS (BP) — Two of the Annuity Board's four retirement plan funds performed well above expectations in 1991, returning more than 20% for the year and setting records.

The Variable Fund earned 28.27%, propelling the unit value to a record high, from \$8.50 on Dec. 31, 1990, to \$10.90 on Dec. 31, 1991.

The Balanced Fund earned 22.42%, its highest return ever.

The board's Fixed Fund earned 8.8% and the Short-Term Fund earned 5.71%.

Market performance for 1991 was a surprise even to investment experts, according to John Jones, the Annuity Board's senior vice president for investments.

"Most experts expected somewhat lackluster returns" for stock and bond investments in 1991, Jones said, but surges at the beginning and end of the year produced "superlative" returns. Jones and his staff direct and

monitor a stable of outside investment managers.

Good earnings in the board's Defined Benefit Fund made it possible for trustees to increase benefits for more than 16,000 annuitants. The permanent 10% increase will be included in checks mailed at the end of January to retirees who participated in Plan A, which was closed to new contributions at the end of 1987. Almost 25,000 working members who participated in Plan A will benefit from the increase when they retire.

Tune writes for Annuity Board.

## CLASSIFIED

RATE 50c per word. \$5.00 minimum. Cash with order except on contract advertising. Include name, address, zip code, and phone number in word count. No blind ads.

**For Sale: Eagle 46 Passenger Buses with Air Condition, Restroom, Reclining Seats — Extra clean! — For More Information, Call Tom Shows, Cedar Hill Charter Service, 1-800-826-6849 (In Miss) or 1-800-654-4379 (Out of state).**

**CHURCH PEW CUSHIONS:** Manufactured in our plant. For free estimate contact — Emmons Brothers, P. O. Box 186, Meridian, Miss. 39301. Since 1899. Phone (601) 693-4451.

**CHARTER A BUS —** reasonable cost, efficient/friendly service, comfortable traveling. Make plans for your group, young or old. We'll make your travel arrangements or provide only transportation. For more information call toll free in Mississippi 1-800-826-6849, or out of state 1-800-654-4379 or write Cedar Hill Charter Service, Box 2554, Laurel, MS 39442.

**SEEKING FULL-TIME minister of Youth/Outreach,** primarily youth. Church on top five growing churches statewide. Send resume to Noland Road Baptist Church, 4505 S. Noland Rd., Independence, MO 64055

**PLEASE HELP SMALL Northern Illinois SBC mission.** Needed new/used overhead projector for teaching Continuing Witness Training, and used VCR for viewing Sunday School Leadership/Discipleship Training video cassettes. Contact Theodore Davis, pastor, 104 Heron, Watseka, Illinois 60970 (815) 432-2828. Contact Ernest Sadler, DOM, Jackson County Baptist Association, (601) 769-7101 for information about the Watseka Mission.



Joint Committee, a religious-liberty agency, could purchase its own building in Washington. Instead the BJC has continued to rent office space, using interest on the fund to pay rent.

The Christian Life Commission, which last year succeeded the BJC as Southern Baptists' representative on religious-liberty issues, says it is now the logical recipient of the funds — and all the interest earned since 1964.

But the Baptist Joint Committee says the money was intended for its use and has been under its control for 27 years. Last September the BJC asked for the money to purchase a building, but the Foundation froze the funds until the Executive Committee acts on the dispute.

"Whatever the legal possibilities, technical arguments, or political dynamics impinging on this issue," wrote Trulove, "it is this foundation's firm conviction that it would be a

mistake to redirect any Southern Baptist Foundation monies from the purpose for which they were given."

Trulove's letter was addressed to C. Ray Fuller, who chairs the Executive Committee subcommittee through which the study group will report.

Fuller, a pastor in Joliet, Ill., was cautious in his response.

"I've not heard from enough of the foundations to know whether or not he (Trulove) speaks for them," Fuller said.

Fuller suggested there could be "some expression of concern both ways" — that some foundation directors could consider a decision either in favor of the CLC or the BJC to be "an act of integrity."

Fuller said he welcomed Trulove's input but said he could not predict how it might affect the Executive Committee decision.

Although the 30 foundation directors have taken no official stand on the matter, several told ABP they share Trulove's concern.

Warner is editor of Associated Baptist Press.

Thursday, January 30, 1992

## Media librarians focus on training

NASHVILLE — Helping media librarians support churches in training teachers and leaders and support the personal growth of individuals is the focus of Church Media Library Leadership Conferences at Ridgecrest (N.C.) and Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist conference centers this summer.

"Media Libraries... Focus on Training" is the theme for emphasis in general sessions led by Ralph McIntyre, retired director of evangelism and education, study and research for the Baptist World Alliance. An added feature will be video clips of historic events from the Sunday School Board's church media library department as it begins a year-long celebration of its 50th anniversary.

The conference at Glorieta is Aug. 8-14, and at Ridgecrest, Aug. 22-28.

## What's in your hand?

By Jim Booth  
Exodus 4:1-4

Several passages seem to have special application to the deaf and to those of us who work with deaf people. This story of the call of Moses is one of those passages. How it applies to those of us in deaf ministries will, I hope, be clear.



Booth

The excuses Moses used are not unlike ours today. He first questioned his own ability, "Who am I?" Humility is a needed quality for the Christian, but we need to remember that who we are is not as important as who God is. The primary person is not the believer, but God.

Second, Moses questioned God's credentials, "Who are You?" Moses seemed to hold to the prevailing concept of deity of his day, that gods, Jehovah included, were local deities. However, Jehovah God was not local. His name described him, "I Am that I Am."

You and I have dreams and goals of becoming more tomorrow than we are today. That is not so with God, for he is all that he wants to be now.

Third, he questioned the faith of the people he would lead, "What if they won't believe me?" Certainly our lifestyle colors our witness, but the credibility of God's Word is based in God's character, not ours.

Moses' problem was that he was trying to convince God not to choose him, but God had already chosen him. Moses thought this was a job interview, when in reality it was a job announcement.

"What do you have in your hand, Moses?" God was getting ready to teach Moses a lesson; Moses needed to be aware of the thing God was going to use.

Have you ever thought about the common-ness of what Moses had? He had a rod, a straight stick that shepherds and others used. There were probably more shepherd's rods than people in that part of the world at the time. It was a common object, plain and unadorned, kept for its utility and not its beauty. Yet it was valuable throughout the ministry of Moses.

When I was growing up, I delighted in reading how Superman would save his world from terrible threat. I dreamed of being Superman. But one day I realized that when trouble came, everyone sat around saying, "If only Superman would come." In much the same way, I have heard people say, "If only our spiritual Superman would come."

We don't need supermen and superwomen, spiritual or otherwise. We need ordinary people who are willing to be led by God's Spirit. Those we perceive to be great men and women of God are just ordinary people who gave God priority in their lives.

"What do you have in your hand," Christian? For those who are in deaf ministries, because of the nature of the sign language, we literally have the gospel of Jesus Christ. We communicate that gospel with our hands. But others have the gospel in their hands, too. Jesus said that when you give a cup of cold water, visit the prisoners, feed the hungry, or do a thousand other godly acts of kindness in the name of Jesus, you communicate the gospel with your hands.

What do you have in your hands? Don't worry what you don't have or what you might have in ten years. What do you have now? Maybe it's common, ordinary, and unadorned in your estimation. Remember that shepherd's rod that Moses had, then give what you have into the hands of Jesus. He'll use it.

Booth is consultant with Cooperative Missions Department, MBCB.

## Lottie Moon goals met

Hollandale Church has exceeded its goal for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. The church, Greg Williams, pastor, set a goal of \$6,000 for the 1991 Lottie Moon Offering. Total amount given to date is \$7,754.05.

South Corinth Church, Alcorn Association, set a goal of \$700 for its Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. The amount collected of \$1,014 was the highest ever given. Dan B. Wright is pastor.

First Church, Olive Branch, surpassed its Lottie Moon goal by more than 36% and has voted to increase its Cooperative Program gifts by 1/2% per year through 1995. P. J. Scott is pastor.



Heucks Retreat Church, Brookhaven, held its "All The Way In One Day" emphasis for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering on Dec. 8. The goal of \$4,500 was surpassed with an offering of \$4,892.41 for the one day. By the end of December the offering total had reached \$5,272.41. This amount represented the largest amount the church has ever received for foreign missions. Pictured is Mary Helen Reynolds, WMU director at Heucks Retreat Church, presenting a check for the total amount to Greg Potts, pastor.

First Church, Picayune, set a church goal of \$18,000 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions. The amount received was \$25,091.23.

Union Church, Covington Association, set a goal of \$2,750 for the Lottie Moon Offering for Foreign Missions. The amount received was \$3,308.

### OLD BIBLES REBOUND

A price, binding and style to meet every need. Quality workmanship guaranteed. Write for illustrated price folder. "Internationally known specialists" **NORRIS BOOKBINDING CO.** Box 305-C — Greenwood, Miss. 38930

### CHURCH FURNITURE

For Quality and Low Prices  
Oak — Pine — Veneer

Wallace Foy

1-800-898-0651

NEW  
AND  
USED

### LOW COST LEVEL PREMIUM LIFE INSURANCE

Permanent Term Policy  
Examples of Monthly Premiums  
Male, Non-Smoker

AGE	\$50,000	\$100,000
45	\$ 29	\$ 52
55	55	104
65	114	221

Premiums and death benefit remain fixed for the life of the insured. Issued to age 80. Company rated A+ (Superior).

**LIFE INSURANCE SAVERS**  
The Term Specialists  
1 (800) 424-TERM

## Letters to the editor

### Fight to stop all tragedies

Editor:

January 5 was "Sanctity of Human Life Sunday" and I am greatly concerned about our stand as Christians. Yes, I believe that abortion as a means of birth control is wrong. I also believe that premarital sex is a sin. There is no Scripture that "literally" states that abortion is wrong. However, there are many that clearly say fornication is a sin.

With all the exposure to the media today, our young people are being taught that sex is okay. Premarital sex is the root of the abortion problem, but we as Christians are not getting that message across. We are saying, "Don't have sex, but if you do, don't have an abortion because that would be terribly wrong." Isn't the sexual act just as wrong?

According to the Bible no sin, other than rejecting Christ, is greater than any other sin. If this is true then why don't we Christians have a "Chastity Sunday" or a "Stop Child Abuse Sunday?" Also, why should this be the criteria on which we choose a political leader? There are many non-Christians who believe abortion is wrong. Our government leaders make many decisions every day that affect our lives. Their stand on abortion is not an indication of how they will guide our nation.

I do not believe that abortion is the "ultimate sin," and therefore I do not think it should receive the ultimate attention from the Christian body. I also do not believe that it is the ultimate atrocity against a human life.

I believe that a child who dies before he has the mental ability to reject Christ, goes to heaven. This child is not in agony. Every day thousands of children are abused and neglected. These children are in agony. Every day, adults die and go to hell because they did not accept Christ. They too are in agony. As Christians we should be fighting with everything we have to stop these tragedies.

Celeste Corey  
Grenada

### If SBC survives

Editor:

Your editorial "The anatomy of a split" has one flaw. It does not carry the investigation to the origin of the problem.

Examination of I Kings 11:1-13 gives the root of the destruction of the kingdom. "... King Solomon loved,

many foreign women ... from the nations whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.' Solomon clung to these in love ... Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, 'Because you have done this ... nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem ...'

J. Wash Watts in a Survey of The Old Testament, Volume 2, page 25 offers the following comments on Solomon: "Marriage with many foreign women ... undertaken contrary to the will of JHWH ... were condemned in no uncertain terms as the cause of compromises with idolatry and the wrath of God upon his rule. By and by they brought calamity."

If the Southern Baptist Convention is destroyed, the root problem will be discovered further back than 20 years ago. If the Southern Baptist Convention survives and continues to be used of God, it will be because of loyalty to God and his Word.

George E. Meadows  
Florence

### Looking for former members

Editor:

We are looking for former members and friends of the Northside Baptist Church, of Dixon, Ill. An anniversary and homecoming celebration is being planned, and we want to include everyone who has had an association with the church. For more information contact Rev. Daniel Bentz, 598 River Lane, Dixon, IL 61021, (815) 288-5212.

### Spend time in prayer

Editor:

As Southern Baptists, we need to set aside Feb. 10-12 as days of prayer and fasting. In May 1845, our Southern Baptist Convention was organized to promote foreign and home missions. The preamble speaks of "... carrying into effect the benevolent intentions of our constituents, by organizing a plan for eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the whole denomination in one sacred effort for the propagation of the Gospel."

We know from James 5:16 (NIV) that, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." Throughout the history of mankind, when God's people have humbled themselves and prayed, there have been dramatic effects.

In 1746, the French set out to destroy Christianity in America as they saw it. They sent 70 ships with 12,000 people, of which were 8,000 soldiers. The Americans had no way to protect themselves. But the Great Awakening had begun in 1740. When our forefathers heard of the French plans, the women went to the city squares to pray and the men went to bolster the seaports. The French went through much fog and lost 45 ships on the way to Halifax. As they left Halifax to attack Annapolis, New England set aside a day of prayer and fasting on Oct. 16. At 4 p.m., the greatest gale of the 18th century destroyed all the ships but two. Those two ships returned to France.

I have watched politics invade our convention. On May 6, 1989, in The Clarion-Ledger, Paige Patterson was quoted as saying, "The time has come for new undertakings for turning to the missionary and evangelistic goals of the convention." In the Baptist Record issue of Jan. 16, 1992, G. Keith Parker, area director for Europe, charges "Trustees are shifting to using money and power as a method to control Baptist bodies overseas and to enforce theological orthodoxy and are ignoring the diversity and autonomy of European Baptists."

For those of us who have stood by and watched the politics, it is time to kneel and pray for our cooperative mission effort. As a WMU director, I plan to ask our ladies to pray with fervent and unceasing effort, especially during the dates of the next Foreign Mission Board meeting on Feb. 10-12.

I would like to issue a call to all WMU directors to ask their ladies to pray, especially during this time when the future of the direction and method of our foreign mission efforts appears unstable. We know the mightiest and greatest resource of the church is prayer. We also know from biblical study the importance of concerted and united prayer.

Let us, therefore, all spend time in prayer with our Father, asking for his will to be made known — especially during the Foreign Mission Board meeting on Feb. 10-12.

Sandra N. Nash  
Clinton



# Just for the Record



RAs of Carterville Church, Petal, attended the Tri-State Camp-O-Ree in Memphis for the first time in October 1991. There the RA chapter won the "Honor Chapter" award, which is the highest honor to receive at the camp-o-ree. Those who attended were Cody Hinton, Ricky McAtee, Tyler Smith, Drew Causey, Mann Tang, Josh Oberst, David McAtee, Chau Tang, Derrick Brown, Josh Kizziah, Nate Moore, and Marcus McAtee. RA counselors were Dwight McKenzie, David Smith, Jack Robinson, Ford Weatherford, Lyle Rainey, and Terry McAtee.



Bethel Church, Monticello, had ground breaking services on Dec. 22 for its \$250,000 education building. Pictured, left to right, are Charlotte Johnson; Peggy Sumrall; Seth Sumrall and Cavie Sumrall, who donated the land; Paul Smith, pastor; Tessie Summers, Mike Wilson, Kenneth Oliver, and Dick Reeves.

Montgomery Church, Lincoln Association, will hear missionaries Robert and Janice Mooney on Sat. night, Feb. 1 at 6:30 p.m. The Mooneys will tell about their work in Zambia, Africa, and show slides. Also they will deliver a Sunday morning message on Feb. 2. Neighboring churches are invited, said Mrs. Christine Freeman, WMU director. A fellowship meal will follow the Sunday morning service. Mooney is a former pastor of the Montgomery Church. Starrett Cleveland is present pastor.

## Mississippian to serve with CSI in Mongolia

Martha M. Taylor, Hattiesburg, will leave Feb. 10 for Mongolia as a member of Cooperative Services International of the Foreign Mission Board, SBC. Presently she is in orientation at the Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Va.

She has served as educational worker in a California church for the past nine years. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Taylor, are members of Temple Church, Hattiesburg.

## Revival dates

Straight Bayou Church, Anguilla: Feb. 9-14; 7 p.m. nightly; J. Harold Smith, Newport, Tenn., founder and president of the Radio Bible Hour, evangelist; John and Lisa McDaniell, Memphis, Tenn., music evangelists; Sunday, high attendance day scheduled for Sunday School at 9:45 a.m. and dinner on the grounds; family night will be observed on Wednesday with a special fellowship after the service; Brad Banks, pastor.

1895 — The Annie W. Armstrong offering was introduced for the support of Home Missions.

## Temple, Big Point, to commission missionaries

Walter and Deanie Johnson will be commissioned as foreign missionaries to the Philippines on Feb. 2, 2:30 p.m., at Temple Church in Big Point. A reception will be held following the service.

## "FREEDOM"

From page 5

able to stand up and begin to march forward."

One Romanian minister told the visiting team, "(One) need we hope the West will be able to meet more effectively through the open borders is simply fellowship. It strengthens us to learn that there is a body of Christ worldwide that truly cares for us as brothers and sisters."

While they still have the opportunity, Romanian Christians are constructing church buildings as fast as construction costs will allow. There has been more than a 1000% rise in the cost of building materials in the past year.

Paul Negrut, who is president of Romania's Evangelical Alliance, told ASSIST in June of 1991: "I think that God demolished the Berlin Wall not for politicians and businessmen, but primarily for Christians so that his family can come together — East and West. You bring the zeal and you bring the knowledge. And that will be the strength of the family of God." He then added: "You bring the fuel and we bring the fire."

Romanian Christians are finally emerging from a forty-year nightmare. How they deal with the current situation is a question that still needs to be answered. Will we be able to stand with them in this difficult time in their history?

Dan Wooding is a British journalist living in Southern California, where he is founder and international director of ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in Strategic Times).

## ROMANIA

From page 3

centered, self-serving, and un-Christlike."

In their resignation letter, the Thomases noted the Romanian Baptist Union "has chosen to support the conservative movement" within the SBC and the mission board.

"This decision was motivated by promises of massive funding in return for their support," the missionaries charged. "This is both disgusting and immoral, and we cannot condone — even in a passive way — this action."

The Thomases cited the "worsening situation for the (FMB) staff in Richmond," explaining the departure of Ballenger and Parker means "that the people under whom we have worked and ministered for nearly 18 years will be replaced with persons with whom we are diametrically opposed, both in practical theology and life goals. Or, to state it more clearly, we prefer to work with men and women of God who are 'professional missionaries' and who have only the advancement of God's kingdom at heart, and not a specific political agenda."

Foreign Mission Board trustee Steve Hardy of North Carolina said he regrets the resignations of the Thomases, whom he called "productive and faithful missionaries." Hardy is chairman of the trustee committee which oversees work in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.

But he said, "I don't agree with their perspective and would remind them the trustees of the Foreign Mission Board are elected by Southern Baptists at their annual meeting."

Hardy said he "would be willing to review any documentation that (the Thomases) can present about promises of massive amounts of mission money to the Romanian union if (the Romanians) would support the defunding of Ruschlikon."

In December a letter was sent from Vasile Talos, Romanian union president, and Nic Gheorghita, general secretary, to the Foreign Mission Board. The letter stated "in the matter of defunding the seminary of Ruschlikon, the General Council of the Baptist Union of Romania, gathered in the meeting of Nov. 26, 1991, agreed to this decision of the FMB." It went on to outline concerns the Romanians have about the seminary's perceived theological liberalism.

Questioned about his statement on funding, Thomas said that after the Romanian letter was sent, Gheorghita told him, "Well, this puts us first in line to get all the money for Ruschlikon."

Gheorghita is traveling in the United States. Numerous attempts to

## Volunteers needed for Feb. 1 workday at Crestwood Center

Crestwood Baptist Center is planning a Saturday workday for Feb. 1, from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., according to Shari Barnes, assistant manager.

**Project Yard Work:** Limbs to be picked up, yard to be raked, bushes to be trimmed.

**Project Shed:** A shed behind the center needs to be cleaned out. A truck will be needed for this project to haul trash.

**Project Insulation:** The children's house needs to have the insulation put in the attic.

Anyone interested in helping with one of these projects may call the center at 353-7683.

1902 — The first religious census taken in the state was at Greenwood, under the direction of Landrum Leavell, the state Sunday School worker.

contact him for comment have been unsuccessful. Baptist Press will continue to attempt to obtain his response.

"I hope our missionaries in Europe will continue to do the excellent work they are involved in and patiently allow the smoke to clear from recent trustee decisions," Hardy said.

Speculation has arisen in the Southern Baptist Convention about a possible missionary backlash in response to developments following the Ruschlikon defunding. The Thomases are the first to make public a decision to resign in protest.

"With two kids in college and three more at home, this is a big step for us," he admitted. "We have no job offer and no employment on the horizon. But we felt like what is going on, we can't tolerate."

"My father-in-law, who is a retired pastor in South Carolina, said there come one or two times in your life when you have to make a stand for what is right, no matter what it costs you. And Kathie and I have decided this is one of those times. The Lord will take care of us; we're sure of that."

Creswell writes for FMB.

## 15 PASSENGER CHURCH VANS

We have the largest selection of 15 passenger church vans in Mississippi - new and used.

DUB HERRING FORD-LINCOLN-MERCURY  
DUB HERRING CHRYSLER-PLYMOUTH-DODGE

Call the Hotline 1-800-776-5497

Ask for DONNIE COUNTS - Fleet Manager, or write to  
600 Hwy. 11 South, Picayune, MS 39466

BRENTWOOD, WITH OVER 1,200 TITLES IN PRINT ANNOUNCES:

## We Will Publish Your Book Now!

THESE ARE SOME OF THE SERVICES YOU RECEIVE FROM BRENTWOOD...



- Cover Art
- Color Cover
- Author Photo
- Sharp Graphics
- Copyright
- Publicity
- Distribution
- Payment Terms

ORDER YOUR BOOKS IN ANY QUANTITY  
100 to 10,000 Copies • Soft or Hardback

If your manuscript is complete, and you are ready to publish your book CALL:

BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN PRESS Toll Free 800 334-8861

Or write us at: 4000 BEALLWOOD AVE., COLUMBUS, GA. 31904-7217

Cut out some time

just for YOURSELF

Seminar Featuring  
Florence and Fred Littauer  
January 31 - February 1, 1992

First Baptist Church  
431 North State Street  
Jackson, Mississippi



Fellowship Hall East  
Cost: \$10.00 per person

— Friday Evening . . . . . 7 to 9 p.m. — Saturday Morning . . . . . 8 a.m. to 12 noon —  
"Make The Tough Times Count" "How Good People Get Into Trouble"  
& "The Best Of The Personality" & "The Call To Christian Leadership Or Heed The Call; Don't Fall Like Saul"



Bus Supply Company is your  
**CHAMPION DEALERSHIP**  
offering your area a fine selection of models  
from 13 to 29 passenger mini buses.

**Bus Supply Company**  
Hwy. 98 East, McComb, MS 39648  
(601) 684-2900 1-800-748-8681



# Amos shares visions of Israel's destruction



## BIBLE BOOK

By Charles E. Nestor  
Amos 7:1-3, 8-17a

Amos shares five visions which God has revealed to him as messages for Israel. In each, he magnifies the certain and permanent destruction of the Northern Kingdom.

The vision of locusts (7:1-3). The main thrust is not that we are able to explain the details of how the vision was received. We are to affirm that God enabled Amos to understand Israel was in trouble. He saw a plague of locusts forming. They were coming down on Israel at a most critical time, the time of harvest. This type plague was understood by people of Amos' day. The destruction was great. However, Amos knew this was the judgment of God on the na-

tion. His heart is filled with love and compassion for his people. Therefore, he pleads with God to forgive them and save the land from this terrible plague.

The Israelites had convinced themselves they were self-sufficient, but Amos knew they were helpless in facing God's judgment. It should be noted that God spared Israel because of the intercession by Amos. However, this would only delay the judgment. Israel's own repentance was necessary to avoid God's judgment.

This act of love by Amos is an illustration of how Christians should seek the face of God on behalf of others. We do not have the power to save them, but we do have the channel by which we can lift up their needs to our heavenly Father. A Christian who is not praying for the lost and fellow believers is not being faithful to his calling. Have you prayed for someone today? Your prayer could be the key which opens God's blessing to that person.

The vision of the plumbline (7:8-9). God will not overlook the sin of people. This vision is a picture of the judgment God would bring to the Israelites. The plumbline is a weight at the end of a line and is used to determine depth of water, the verticalness of a wall and other uses. The wall God was stationed on was perfectly true

and solid because it was built by his plumbline. The wall represented Israel as God planned for them to be. God told Amos that he was measuring Israel with the plumbline. They do not pass the test, and God promises his judgment is coming.

Judgment begins at the house of God. The people were worshipping at altars built by the Canaanites to their pagan gods. The Lord had commanded that they be torn down, but the Israelites continued to use them. Judgment also reached the house of the king. The reference was to Jeroboam II and all who had opposed the house of David. Jeroboam I rebelled against God by establishing worship of the golden calf. His successors to the Northern Kingdom were faithful to follow him in their sin. Now God was going to destroy them as a nation.

God is still the same today. He will not tolerate sin. These verses speak to the church. We are to worship God and be sure the activity of the church is fulfilling God's plan. It is not to be conformed to the pattern of the world. Likewise, those in places of public leadership will be accountable to God for the manner in which they serve the people. The political leaders of our day need to hear these words of warning from God.

Amaziah confronts Amos (7:10-17a). Bethel was the center of worship in northern Israel and the sanctuary of the king. Amaziah probably was the leading priest of that area. Priests were to be appointed by God, but Jeroboam I appointed his own as an act of rebellion against the house of David. Apparently Amaziah was not a descendant of the priestly tribe of Levi. The words of Amos were not what Amaziah wanted to hear. Amos tells of God's judgment against the house of Jeroboam with the sword. Amaziah tells the king that Amos has conspired against him. Then Amaziah instructs Amos to go do his preaching in Judah. Amos is not discouraged by his criticism, but emphasizes he was called by God to this ministry. It was not because he was of the family of a prophet. His testimony was much like Paul when he told his hearers that he could not do anything else but preach Christ because that was his calling from God.

The visions of Amos are a reminder to us of surety of God's judgment of sin and the need for us to seek forgiveness. God's mercy is far reaching and is available to all who seek him. May we continue to teach and live the truth so that the lost world may find peace in the mercy of God.

Nestor is pastor, First Church, Bruce.

## Overcoming anxiety: seek first the kingdom of God



## LIFE AND WORK

By Lola M. Autry  
Matthew 6:19-34

What do you worry about? Does that worry overcome problems? If so, tell how it does. If not, then why worry? Norman Vincent Peale once stated that normal sensible concern is an important part of a mature person, but worry keeps one from functioning best. Jesus had much to say on the subject. His compelling reasons for not worrying should become as starred items in our daily living.

I. Giving proper place to concern about physical needs (v. 25). Jesus said, in essence, "Don't worry about your life. There are things more important than food and clothing." So often we ask, without thinking through his meaning, what are they? Jesus is not saying we should care whether we eat or are clothed. He is stressing that these should not be uppermost in our lives.

II. Depending on God's care (vv. 26-30). Jesus always used words that described something familiar to his listeners when he was putting forth examples. In these verses he speaks of birds and growth and flowers. The heavenly Father takes care of these things, he asserts. How much more, Jesus reasons, he cares for you for whom he has made plans for eternity. Jesus teaches: Live on this earth, but keep your eyes on heaven. That is where real treasures exist.

III. Trusting the father (vv. 31-32). Verse 31: "Therefore take no thought..." he insists, DON'T WORRY. Don't let your prime thoughts

rest on material things. Don't let your life be ruled by what you want or by what you think you need. There is necessary thought regarding the needs of living, but Jesus warns against disquieting, tormenting, doubtful thought.

A number of years ago a woman cooked her first turkey. Before serving it she told her husband and son that if it didn't turn out all right they were not to say a word. The family would simply get up from the table and go downtown for dinner. When she entered the room bearing the turkey to place on the table she found the two already seated, wearing their hats and coats. Often we are that way. One part of us says we know you can do it, Lord. Another answers, but seeing is believing. It is easier to worry than to wait.

IV. Placing priority on kingdom concerns. One of my favorite verses in all the Bible is verse 33. Seek ye FIRST! What a statement! What are we to seek before everything else? Simple to state, but not easy to do — "the kingdom of God and his righteousness." The

needs of our souls and eternal happiness in Jesus are the things most important in this life. When those have been attended to, all other things fall into place.

V. Avoiding worry about the future (v. 34). In this verse Jesus again admonished us not to worry. He advises, Don't worry about the future — not even the things of tomorrow. The Lord will provide for us as much as he sees is good for us. Concentrating on the present, with Christ as the guiding force in our lives, will help believers over anxiety.

How often we trust each other, and only doubt our Lord.

We take the word of mortals, and yet distrust his word;

But, oh what light and glory would shine o'er all our days;

If we always would remember God means just what he says.

— Selected

Autry lives in Hickory Flat.

## David provides predecessor to Christ's model prayer



## UNIFORM

By Bobby Williamson

1 Chronicles 29:10-13; Matthew 6:7-15

What should the priorities of prayer life be? In our lesson today we focus on two central texts which reflect the proper priorities and categories that should be included in our prayer lives.

A prayer of praise (1 Chron. 29:10-13). This beautiful Thanksgiving prayer of David overflowed with gratitude and delight. We are told that "David blessed the Lord," and David did it with great fervor and zeal, giving God recognition for all his worldly wealth and greatness. All that we are and all that we have comes from God. Need we be reminded that we need to praise God daily for his goodness and his grace?

A model for prayer: caution and counsel (Matt. 6:7-8).

Here we have a warning about vain repetition in our prayer life. We must understand that God is the heavenly Father who knows our needs before we pray, and thus we should not pray empty, repetitive prayers. The very fact that God does know our every need should encourage each of us to renew our commitments to pray. Here also "babble not" would be a better rendering, both for the form of the word,

which in both languages is intended to imitate the sound, and for the sense, which expresses not so much the repetition of the same words as a senseless multiplication of them.

A model for prayer: reverence and submission (6:9-10).

We are to recognize God as the heavenly Father and approach him with proper reverence. What does the word "hallowed" mean? One definition would be "to be held in reverence." It also means to be regarded and treated as holy. We must not overlook this, for in our understanding of who God is we can certainly have a more effective prayer life.

A model for prayer: provision and forgiveness (6:11-12, 14-15).

Many times it is difficult for each of us to know exactly what to pray for. Here in these verses Jesus clearly shows us that we are to pray for life's material necessities. I am afraid though that many of us have confused our needs with our desires. Does God give the Christian everything he desires? Certainly not! But he does desire to meet our needs as we are open to his sufficiency in our lives. Here we also find a call to pray for forgiveness, and Jesus' comments here on the importance of forgiveness should motivate each of us as adults to repair broken fellowships with God and others.

A model for prayer: help and praise (6:13).

Most of us do not have problems with calling on God in times of trouble. Here Jesus reaffirms God's desire to hear from us as we ask for deliverance in times of trials and temptations.

In the latter half of verse 13 we see a burst of praise that ends this model prayer. We should always make praise an integral part of our prayers. I have always believed that a

praiseless prayer life is a powerless prayer life.

We should note that this prayer is a model prayer, and not "The Lord's Prayer," as many call it. We as Christians should search out the

priorities and categories expressed in this model prayer and make application to our personal prayer lives.

Williamson is pastor, Park Place, Brandon.

## Land commends ABC-TV

NASHVILLE (BP) — ABC-TV should be commended for asking James Dobson's Focus on the Family to produce a new series on Christian values for children, said Richard D. Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission.

"We desperately need wholesome, value-affirming programming such as Dr. Dobson's on network television," Land said. "I applaud ABC for broadcasting the programs and Dr. Dobson's organization for producing them. More such programming is urgently needed but this is an important beginning."

The first episode of Dobson's "McGee & Me" was scheduled to air Saturday, Jan. 25. The exact time varied from city to city, so interested Southern Baptists should contact their local ABC affiliates for future broadcast information.

Focus on the Family has said if the first broadcast receives enough of an audience on ABC-TV, other episodes of the series will be aired later.

"McGee & Me" is a real-life drama

featuring a boy named Nicholas and his cartoon-character friend McGee. Nicholas is shown in day-to-day life situations where he has to make moral decisions.

"Our children, set adrift in a relativistic, values-neutral world and living in families ravaged by divorce and moral decay, are in deep trouble," Land said. "They desperately need an antidote to the sexually explicit, violence-dominated, materially obsessed programming which currently characterizes network television."

Land said recent studies about the moral status of American children are "horrifying."

"In-depth surveys of our nation's youth reveal that 54% of our high school students are sexually active, including 72% of 12th graders," he said. "Other studies tell us both the suicide and homicide rate tripled among 15- to 19-year-olds in the last three decades. Over the same period the number of births to unwed mothers doubled."



## Lucky few will receive the calling to UM Seminar on Southern Religion

UNIVERSITY, Miss. — A dozen college teachers next summer are guaranteed to get some of that old-time religion.

The University of Mississippi's Center for the Study of Southern Culture will lead the small congregation of faculty in a seminar on Southern religion, designed not only to explore the Bible Belt from an academic classroom setting but also to visit several Mississippi locales to give participants firsthand experience with Southern preachers, their churches, revivals, and other special church events.

The seminar, funded by a \$95,133 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, will be held June 15-Aug. 7. Organizers at Ole Miss plan to review applications and accept 12 participants.

Those selected will examine religion in the South, its dominant denominations, and the evolution of African-American churches. They will delve into how religion became so interwoven with the fabric of Southern life that it has influenced ideas, validated certainties, and shielded fears concerning issues ranging from sin to sex to segregation.

The seminar will attempt to show what is distinctly Southern about religion in the South.

Directing the seminar will be Charles Reagan Wilson — Ole Miss associate professor of history and Southern studies, who has also written and edited articles and books on Southern religion and co-edited the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. He will be joined by other scholars on the topic and by local ministers in seminar presentations.

Wilson said the material will explore not only the denominations that enjoy the widest popularity — Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian — but also other faiths with fewer followers that have taken root in the region.

"The thing that makes religion in the South distinctive is the predominance of evangelical groups," he said. "But we also want to talk about religious diversity — for example, what it's like to be a Roman Catholic in a society with the other evangelical denominations."

Wilson said participants will be encouraged to attend worship services and special events at churches in the area. They will visit churches of historical significance, such as Ox-

ford's St. Peter's Episcopal, which was influential in the life and work of William Faulkner. Field trips will be scheduled to distinctive churches in other areas, such as the Mississippi Delta.

The intensive study of Southern religion could also lead to courses on the topic elsewhere. Wilson said the college faculty who attend the seminar should be equipped to initiate classes on Southern religion when they return.

Seminar topics will range from the rise of evangelicalism to the impact of slavery on African-American religion and black churches, and from the separation of Southern Baptists and Methodists from their counterparts in the North to the Fundamentalist movement and its opposition to gambling, dancing, and liquor.

The seminar comes at an opportune time, too. Southern religion is experiencing a kind of revival among scholars.

Undergraduate teachers in liberal arts and the humanities are eligible to apply. For more information, call Wilson at (601) 232-5993, or write to the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, the University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677.



## MC begins new music emphasis

A new church music program with instrumental emphasis has been instituted at Mississippi College. The program is designed for instrumentalists who feel led to serve as minister of music or associate ministers of instrumental music. Faculty members coordinating the program are Lewis Oswald (center), coordinator; John Hanbery (left), professor of instrumental music and consultant in instrumental music for the Church Music Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board; and Richard Joiner (right), professor and head of the MC Department of Music.

## Rogers says scrolls reflect lively era

By Don Kirkland

GREENVILLE, S.C. (BP) — The Dead Sea Scrolls, first found in 1947 in the desert of southern Israel, have been called the "greatest manuscript discovery of modern times." Scholars and others, meanwhile, have argued over who may have access to the ancient documents, which are kept in Jerusalem and controlled by Israel's antiquities department.

But what do these manuscripts of mostly leather and papyrus say to the Christian of today? Plenty, according to Jeff Rogers, instructor in religion at Furman University in Greenville, S.C.

Rogers, a former Baptist pastor in North Carolina, assisted in editing biblical scrolls from one of the caves at Qumran, where the documents were discovered. He also has studied the scrolls at Princeton (N.J.) Theological Seminary, where he is working toward a doctorate.

"The scrolls are a whole library, really," Rogers said, "with remains of approximately 800 documents. I say 'remains' because there are only 10 complete scrolls. The rest are pieces."

Among the scrolls, Rogers said, are multiple copies of books of the Hebrew Bible, or Old Testament. "For instance, there are 27 different copies of the book of Psalms, 25 copies of Deuteronomy, and 18 copies of Isaiah," he explained.

These copies are 1,000 years older than any other Hebrew scriptures available before the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, Rogers said.

"And what we see," he said, "is that no two copies of these books are exactly alike. That means the Hebrew Bible then looked a lot like the Bible now, in its many different English translations."

By comparing the various copies, Rogers said, "We have learned a lot about how the Bible came to us in the form it did."

The scrolls also give a picture of how books of the Bible actually looked during the times of Jesus and such Jewish sages as Hillel and Gamaliel, he said.

Most of the scrolls, however, contain early Jewish writings that are not biblical. But their importance is considerable, according to Rogers.

"They give us a much better picture of what Judaism was like around the turn of the first century."

"What we see," he emphasized, "is

a vital, lively, contentious religion in which people were arguing about and living out many different ways of being Jewish." It was as if there were different "denominations" even in that day, he said.

Some people focused their religion on life in the temple while others were more concerned with daily piety, Rogers noted.

While some concentrated mainly on the expectation of a coming messiah, others thought mostly about the end of the world and even withdrawing from it "to try to live isolated, pure lives."

Many early Jews, Rogers noted, simply tried to live in harmony within the Roman system of empire while others talked about armed resistance.

"It was a remarkable religion in a remarkable time," he said, "and the scrolls help us to understand better who some of these groups were and how they thought and lived."

That is important, Rogers said, because "that was the formative time for the Judaism and Christianity we know today. Both grew out of that vital, lively, and contentious setting of Judaism in the first century."

Kirkland is associate editor, BAPTIST COURIER, South Carolina.

## Action is answer to Mississippi Delta problems, Hawkins says at N.O. meet

By Kevin Devine

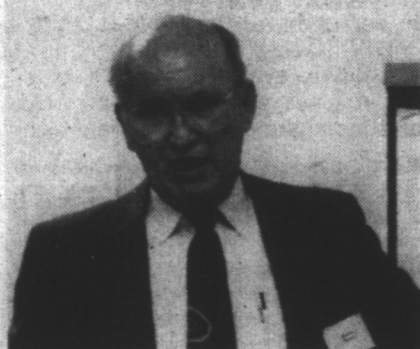
NEW ORLEANS — Wilbur Hawkins, president of the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission, led the session, "The State of the Delta," during the recent "Models for Metropolitan Ministry" conference held at New Orleans Seminary.

Speaking to pastors, church-staff members, and associational workers from across the nation, Hawkins underscored the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the millions of people who live in the Mississippi Delta region.

"Let me say it plainly so that I am not misunderstood; the Mississippi Delta is the Third World in America," Hawkins said.

"Action," Hawkins continued, "is the answer to the problem. The biggest mistake we can make is to periodically start a drive within our church to collect clothes for the clothes bank, or more food for the food bank, or to send a love offering to the local mission. What we do need to do is challenge our people to go down to the local mission and donate their time, their effort. Tell them enough of donating things — donate yourselves."

As the leaders of their congregations, pastors were urged to set the ex-



Perry

ample of meeting the needs of others. "Many congregations do nothing because many pastors do nothing. They deny the existence of the needs of the people around them. They hear of it, they see it on TV, but it couldn't possibly be within the reach of their church. They are what we call NIM-BY pastors, for 'not-in-my-backyard.'"

"I charge you to GET OUT," Hawkins exhorted his audience, "out of the ivory tower of the pastor's study, and confront the needs of the people around you."

Bobby Perry

Gulf Coast Association Director of Missions Bobby Perry led in the session, "Are There New Models for the Old Task?"

He shared his experiences in merging or "blending" declining congregations into new and vital churches. "Sometimes people feel as if they have failed if it comes to the point of closing their church and joining another congregation," Perry said.

The answer, he said, is in "leading these people into an understanding that they can still have a positive purpose in their ministry. They themselves can be a much needed breath of fresh air in another con-

gregation, and their old church building can almost always be used as a mission site for an ethnic congregation," Perry continued. "These dear people are not failures; they have really fulfilled their call, just in another form."

Frank Gunn

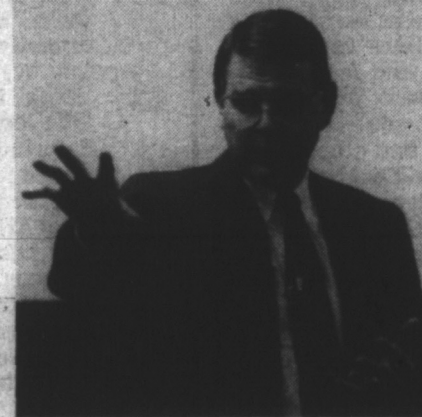
Frank Gunn, pastor of First Church, Biloxi, led the session, "Different Leadership for Different Contexts."

"How will the gospel be spread to those millions in our cities and metro areas?" Gunn asked. "Through the efforts of ordinary preachers, and ordinary congregations, in ordinary churches — doing extraordinary things for the cause of Christ."

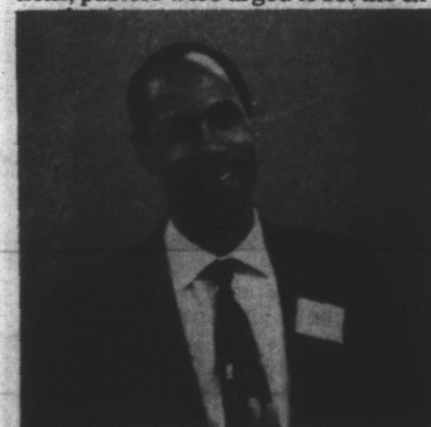
"The gospel will not be shared to the masses by the Superchurch, but by the small to medium size church that is in the midst of the community it seeks to serve."

Speaking primarily to various pastoral leadership styles, Gunn emphasized the need for flexibility within the small-to-medium size church. "This adaptability," Gunn said, "enables a pastor to lead his people in meeting the needs of what is often a changing community."

Devine writes for N.O. Seminary.



Gunn



Hawkins

Baptist Record

Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205

January 30, 1992